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ABSTRACT

Intended for journalists in developing countries, this manual gives a detailed account of the functions carried out in the newsroom. The first section deals with aspects of the reporter's job, including news writing and stylistics, interviewing, and press law. The second section discusses the duties of the news editor, including maintaining perennial sources, thinking ahead, following up on hard news items, promoting creative angles to news stories, and cultivating news from rural areas. The third section covers components of subediting, such as design and layout, typography, headline and caption writing, and elements of style. The fourth section explores developing ideas for feature writing, while the last section outlines principles of photo editing. (HTH)

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The Newsroom

by Frank Barton

Mass Media Manual

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The Newsroom

a manual of journalism for working journalists

- **Reporting**
- **News editing**
- **Sub editing**
- **Feature writing**
- **Picture editing**

The primary aim of this manual is as a guide for new entrants to journalism, giving a detailed account of the functions carried out in the newsroom.

Although it is intended for journalists in developing countries and uses references and photographs from such countries, that does not mean there are different ways of producing newspapers for journalists from different parts of the world. There is just the right way and the wrong way.

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The photographs in the section on Picture Editing were supplied by the Government of India, the Government of Zimbabwe and The Herald, Zimbabwe, to whom grateful acknowledgments are made.

The Reporter

The Reporter

The editor may be the inspiration of the newspaper; the sub-editors are undoubtedly the architects and the builders. But the reporters provide the bricks and cement and the final judgement of a newspaper as a *news*paper will be made by the people who matter most – the readers – on the news content; how interesting the news is, how much news there is and how newsy the news is.

For no matter how independent, how courageous, even how brilliant the editor's editorials may be; no matter how typographically attractive the subs make a paper appear, at the end of the day it is on the news stories the reporters have found and the way they have written them that the paper will be judged.

How often have you heard someone say: "What's in the paper today?" and the answer comes back: "Not much". And they are generally talking out the news in the paper, not the editorial (which, anyway, not many readers look at) and certainly not the typographical appearance of the paper.

So let us start by taking a close look at just what a reporter is. He is *not* a messenger waiting to be sent somewhere. He should not be treated as such and he should certainly not regard himself as such. Far too many editors treat their reporters as messengers and far too many reporters seem to regard themselves as little more than fetch and carry men. All over the world you will find reporters sitting around newsrooms like porters in hotel lobbies waiting to be told to go and bring somebody elses' luggage in.

It has to be said that by and large reporters, who, after all, are the only people on a newspaper the public ever comes into contact with, are not too highly regarded by the public. Some of this disregard is because the press itself is often not respected, but quite often reporters are not well thought of because they do not present themselves in a professional manner. A lot of the remedy is in the reporters' own hands.

When a reporter went to interview the minister of labour in an East African country about the growing unemployment problem, the short-tempered minister asked him: "Just because you are writing about the unemployed, do you have to dress like them?" With open-necked shirt that had not been to the laundry for a week, a jacket with two buttons missing, trousers which had never been pressed since they left the shop, and shoes which had never seen polish, it was a fair question.

If reporters present themselves looking scruffy, they must not complain – though they frequently do – if they are treated scruffily by people in authority and with little respect by anybody else.

Apart from the physical appearance of a reporter, what sort of qualities should he have? Education is clearly important but that does not mean that the better educated he is the better a reporter will be. Reporters clearly need a sound schooling, but there is a lot more to education than going to school and certainly a lot more to being well educated than having a degree. There is a nasty tendency all over the world, and more particularly in poorer countries, to see a degree as some sort of special accolade putting the holder above others.

Anyone who has been to university has been privileged but let them not think that a degree is a guarantee of quality over those who have not got one. Fortunately, there is something of a backlash beginning to occur, with newspapers getting the message that the emphasis placed on degrees for entrance to journalism over the last few years or so has often been misplaced. May this trend continue!

Any young man or woman coming out of secondary school with a good scholastic record has basic education enough to make a journalist. They will need a good many other qualities, the first of which is the realisation that in the wider sense their education for life has just begun, but so far as the schoolroom is concerned they need go no further. Clearly, this does not mean that those who have gone to university have been wasting their time but at the very best university graduates entering journalism should only consider they have *perhaps* a competitive edge on those who have not been to university.

Essential English

Degree or not, every entrant to journalism needs a high standard of English, written and spoken. Whether anybody likes it or not, and plenty of people do not like it, English is now the international language and no journalist is going very far without it. If there is any would-be journalist who thinks that by requiring a good quality of English he is in some way demeaning his own nation and even making some sort of acknowledgement to what may have been his country's old colonial master, then he should get that right out of his head at once. In fact, the principal reason why English is now virtually an international language is as much to do with the United States and their world influence as it has to do with Britain.

Twenty years ago French and English were vying with each other as the number one language but English has come out on top and any journalist who does not recognise that had better get out of the business or else pack his bag and depart for the deepest part of the interior where he can find a nice little vernacular publication in which no foreigner will ever be quoted.

For consider the realities. If the President of, say, Zambia, makes a state visit to Nigeria what language does he use when he gets there? And what language is he greeted in by the President of Nigeria? When the Organisation of African Unity meets they could, if they wished, select any one of the multitude of languages Africa uses, but they use English. And the same thing goes for South East Asia and most of the states in the Caribbean.

In independent Africa as strong a case can be made out for French in the former French possessions.

Essential Qualities

So far our reporter is reasonably well educated, decently turned out and more than just comfortable in English. What other tools does he need for his trade? He, or she, needs a quick, enquiring mind, one that is interested in what is going on not only in his own locality or even his own country but in the world at large; an innate interest in mankind and what mankind is up to. The phrase that sums this up is *well rounded*. It should follow that a well rounded reporter will have a sense of fair play. Over and above the legal pitfalls which beset the reporter every day of his working life, this sense of fair play is vital.

Any well educated person with an enquiring mind is likely to have his own views on life and particularly on politics. This is particularly true of developing countries where life is often stark and always difficult. It would be a poor reporter who did not lean one way or the other politically. But it would be an even poorer reporter who, because he leaned in one political direction, allowed his bias to influence his writing.

Nigeria is a highly capitalist state and there are plenty of capitalist reporters working on its newspaper (even though some of them may be owned by the Government) but any Nigerian reporter with a capitalist outlook who gave a jaundiced report of, say, a speech by a visiting Ethiopian politician because he did not like his Marxist philosophy would just be a very bad reporter.

Sometimes it is very difficult for even the best reporter not to be influenced by the philosophy or the politics of the person he is interviewing or the background of the story he is doing. It is a pretty safe bet that any self-respecting African journalist in South Africa detests apartheid and the people who have created it. And yet an African reporter interviewing, for example, one of the white leaders of that country should be able to conduct the interview, even though with vigorous questions, in a thoroughly professional and *fair* manner.

"Fair to apartheid?" you ask incredulously. Certainly. For fair in jounalistic terms means allowing the person you are interviewing or the facts you are unearthing to speak for themselves. From a commonsense point of view, fairness makes a case of its own. A lot of the reporter's work takes him countinually over the same ground, dealing with the same people – politicians, trade unionists and others in the public eye. Once a reporter is seen to be unfair, let alone incompetent, he will soon find doors closed to him.

So far we have considered the personal qualities of the reporter. Now let us look at the one or two things he needs to help him when he is sitting in front of the typewriter. First and foremost he will need a good dictionary. Ideally this should be provided by the management for general use in the newsroom. Very often it is not, or if it is, it is soon missing. So get your own and keep it somewhere safe. The dictionary's twin is a book called Roget's Thesaurus. This is one of the English-speaking world's most valuable works of reference. It is a treasury of synonyms, antonyms, parallel and related words, designed to help you find the right words or phrase to express your ideas with force and quality. Basically, this is how it works. Let us suppose you are writing a story and you have already used a key word twice and though you want to use it again you feel it will jar rather if you do so. Look up the word in Roget's and it will then give you a whole list of similar words or phrases saying much the same thing as your original word. Pan Reference Books of London publish an excellent, cheap soft cover edition. Get it. A reporter with a good dictionary and a Roget's has given himself several yards start.

You will need, too, a contact book in which you list the useful names, addresses and telephone numbers you are likley to come back to time and time again. It is surprising how few reporters actually have a contact book, but it can often save an awful lot of time and trouble when you need to get in touch with somebody quickly.

Let us consider for a moment just what a reporter is. He is really employed not so much by the newspaper as by the readers of that newspaper who each contribute a few coins each day when they buy his paper so that the reporters can serve up to them the next morning a condensed version of what has been going on in their own community, the country at large and the world outside. The average reader is really saying to the reporters: "Look – I shall be locked up in my office or my factory today earning my living but tomorrow I would like to know what has been happening so you and your colleagues please find out for me".

It is worth stressing this reader-reporter relationship because far too many reporters seem to forget that this is where their daily bread comes from. It is a truism you hear all over the world that reporters are really trying to please their news editors rather than their readers – and in turn the news editors are trying to please their editors. It is a fairly fine distinction but there is an important difference between writing for your average reader and writing for your news editor. The reporter who remembers this distinction will be the better for it.

So let us look at the average reader of the average newspaper. In some circles you will often hear people talking about the "press in the Third World" or "newspapers in developing countries". This presupposes there are different standards of journalism. Forget it. There are only two standards of journalism: good and bad.

Obviously newspapers published in countries which are loosely called by social scientists "developing" (they really mean the poor countries) will sometimes have a different approach than newspapers in, for example, the United States or West Germany. The principal difference between countries like that and most countries in the poorer parts of the world is that in the United States, Germany and other Western nations the average man has a much wider choice of newspapers. The factory worker in Paris or London can choose from sometimes as many as half a dozen different newspapers, varying in their political viewpoint from extreme left to extreme right and also in the way they present the news; either in sedate broadsheet terms such as Britain's *The Times* is famous for, to the much more strident tabloid voice of papers like New York's *Daily News*.

Very few countries outside of Europe are able to offer this selection of papers. India and Nigeria probably come nearest. Many big towns and even capital cities in the developing world have only one daily newspaper and thus it is a question of take-it-or-leave-it for the reader. This means that though he does not face competition from another newspaper and no angry news editor will ever ask him why he missed the good story their competitor has, there is a greater responsibility on the reporter working on the only newspaper in his area. He has to reach everyone, from the best educated to the many more who are poorly educated but who have just as much right to be told what is going on in the world and who have paid the same price for their paper.

But whether readers are offered a selection of different newspapers or just served up with one – and that one possibly owned by the government – the job of the reporter is basically the same; he is the eyes and ears of his readers. Those readers will generally be less educated and they will nearly always be less well-off than their counterparts in rich countries, but basically they will still want the same sort of news diet.

It is not a bad idea for reporters to invent in their own minds a sort of mythical average reader, a composite man or woman embodying the average standards, tastes and needs of the community their newspaper serves. Bearing in mind that virtually every newspaper in the poor countries we are talking about is puplished in a city or large town, a good mythical composite reader might be *The Man in the Biscuit Factory*.

Let us have a look at this chap. His job is not a particularly good job but it isn't a bad job and he is certainly better off than a lot of people. He left school at about 15 with average marks, though he is not as literate as he would have been if he had been born into a richer society. He is married and has two small children. Life is, on the whole, a bit of a struggle for him and he lives from one pay-day to the next. One of his main concerns is that he will be able to give his two children a reasonable education. Outside of stretching his wages as far as they will go, his principal interest is football.

He is quite interested, though often a little bored, by the political jockeying that seems to go on in his country almost ceaselessly.

He is nobody's fool, this *Man in the Biscuit Factory*, and though he knows little about the world at large he has an instinctive feeling that something is wrong in a world where some countries seem to have so much while his own country, or most of the people in it, have so little. Often he is far from happy about the gap between the tiny number of super-rich and the vast number of dreadfully poor in his own country.

There are millions of men in biscuit factories like this all over the world and if newspapers can reach them and talk to them in a language they understand, about things they may not always understand but can be helped to understand, newspapers will flourish. Not only that, but they will have made a real contribution to helping their nations flourish, too.

So every time a reporter puts a piece of copy paper into his typewriter and gathers his thoughts as he begins to write his story let him remember the *Man in the Biscuit Factory*.

When you are trying to explain something by talking, you can see immediately whether you are succeeding or not and what impression you are making. You can emphasise points by moving your hands or raising your voice, even smiling. And most important of all, if the person you are talking to does not understand you he can ask you questions. But when you are writing you do not have a second chance. Once the words are down on paper you have either succeeded or failed – and you may never know which. It is a pretty safe bet that all over the world, from the most sophisticated societes to the least developed, there are newspaper readers every day who are getting a totally different meaning from what they are reading in their newspapers from what the reporter set out to tell them. Clear writing is the result of clear thinking.

Clarity and simplicity

The worst thing anybody can say about a reporter's story is that it is not clear. It the sub-editor handling it says this and the reporter is not around to explain just what is meant then the proper place for the story is on the spike. As sub-editors are often working at night after the reporters have gone home this is where far too many stories end up. But any day in almost any town you can still see newspapers with stories which are just not clear, or which require much more careful reading to make them clear than any newspaper reader hurrying for his bus or anxious to get to the shop before it closes is likely to give them. Journalism is such an all-embracing and complex

craft that there are very few hard and fast rules. There are times when most rules will be deliberately broken – even the law of libel if the editor is so moved that he decides he must challenge someone by libelling them.

But the one rule that must never be broken by the reporter is clarity. His story must be clear, accurate and so constructed that the reader can understand it without any trouble at the first reading. This case for clarity should apply to everything else in the newspaper as well as the news; the features, the leading article or editorial and even things like the radio and television programmes. But the reporter has an added responsibility and that is to be clear *and concise*.

It should not have to be said but it can still hardly be said enough times that a reporter writing a news story is concerned with facts or well substantiated theories from people like police officers or doctors quoted in the story. There is no room for the reporter's *views*. As was stressed earlier, the reporter is really employed by the readers of the newspaper to tell them what has been happening. If he does his job well the readers can form their own views on what has happened, whether it should have happened, whether it was right or wrong or any other slant which readers may take according to their own viewpoint. They cannot do this if the news the reporter presents to them is flavoured by his views.

One day the good reporter may end up as an editor and then he will have plenty of time and space to airs his views in the leader columns which represent the view of the paper. Even those reporters who will never end up in the editorial chair are highly likely fairly early on in their careers to find themselves writing feature articles. Feature articles will often contain the views of the writers, provided it is made perfectly clear that the views are the writers'. But the news columns should contain only one thing – news.

One of the unfortunate things about many newspapers is the fact that young men and women who have hardly found their way around the newsroom and have certainly not mastered the basic craft of gathering the facts for a news story and presenting them in a clear, concise and straightforward manner are hurried into feature writing. If is unfair on young journalists and the worst thing about it is that they are rarely, if ever, instructed in the two totally different approaches needed for news and features. Features are dealt with in a later chapter.

Setting it out

Nobody can claim to be a good reporter unless he submits copy which is set out so that the subs can handle it with ease. It is extraordinary the number of newspaper offices where subs are having to deal with not just badly written stories but stories set out in such a way that they take twice as long to handle on the subs' desk.

With the new electronic age beginning to revolutionise editorial departments the well-tried customs of the past 300 years are beginning to change. But the electronic age is still a long way off for many newspapers and until it arrives reporters should follow the accepted custom of setting out their copy. Copy paper for every reporter in the newsroom should always be of the

same size. This is generally about 8 inches by 5 inches. This size fits on to the clipboard of the Linotype or Intertype. It is very much easier for the chief sub-editor, as he comes on duty and begins to go through the copy to asse[illegible] not only the quality of the stories but their length if all the reporters' stories are presented in the same manner. And most of the dark oaths you hear muttered by printers as they set stories is because the copy is either "dirty" (that is, badly written and thus heavily subbed) or written on sheets of paper which do not fit the clipboard.

Well run editorial departments will have a standard practice for the way copy is set out. Double spacing is, of course, paramount and preferably a bit bigger than double spacing so that the subs can easily insert a new word without having to write it too small. The reporter will put his surname on the top left-hand corner of the copy paper and the catch-line of the story on the opposite right-hand corner. A word about catch-lines. Keep them short and keep them relevant. Remember the catch-line is a sort of trade mark for the story so that everybody who handles it after the reporter knows exactly what it is. Never use more than one word. It is nonsense to use catch-lines like *Budget speech* or *Train crash*. *Budget* and *Crash* is quite sufficient.

The intro for every story should be written on a separate sheet of paper, no matter how short the intro may be. This is because very often the intro will be set in different type size than the rest of the story and may thus be set by a different printer. Leave plenty of space at the top of the copy paper and at least two inches on the left-hand margin so that the sub has all the room he needs for his instructions to the printer. Never, never, never *run-on* – that is, continue a sentence from one folio to the next. Anybody who does this is not a journalist. Again, if when the story goes down to be set there is a last-minute rush and the foreman printer has to share out the folios among two or three printers to set, it is impossible to do so if there is a run-on.

At the end of each folio use one of the standard instructions to signify the story continues on the next page: *more follows*, *more* or *m/f*. At the end of the story on the final folio put: *ends*. There is nothing more infuriating for a printer late at night, having just set half a dozen columns of dirty copy, to suddenly come across a story which, because the final page does not have *ends* on it, has everyone searching all over the place for the next page.

It is arguably better to have indifferent reporters who can at least present their copy properly than good reporters who serve up slip-shod, dirty copy that gives headaches to sub-editors and printers.

Here is how the first folio of a story should be set out:

How the reporter wrote the intro.

Patil Crash 1

Three people died, one of them a priest, and another 14 were injured, many of them badly, when a bus carrying a party of members of the Bombay All Saints Church choir crashed on a steep hill nine miles outside of the city yesterday. A police spokesman told the press that the brakes had failed when the driver tried to swerve the bus to avoid hitting some cattle which were on the road.

mf

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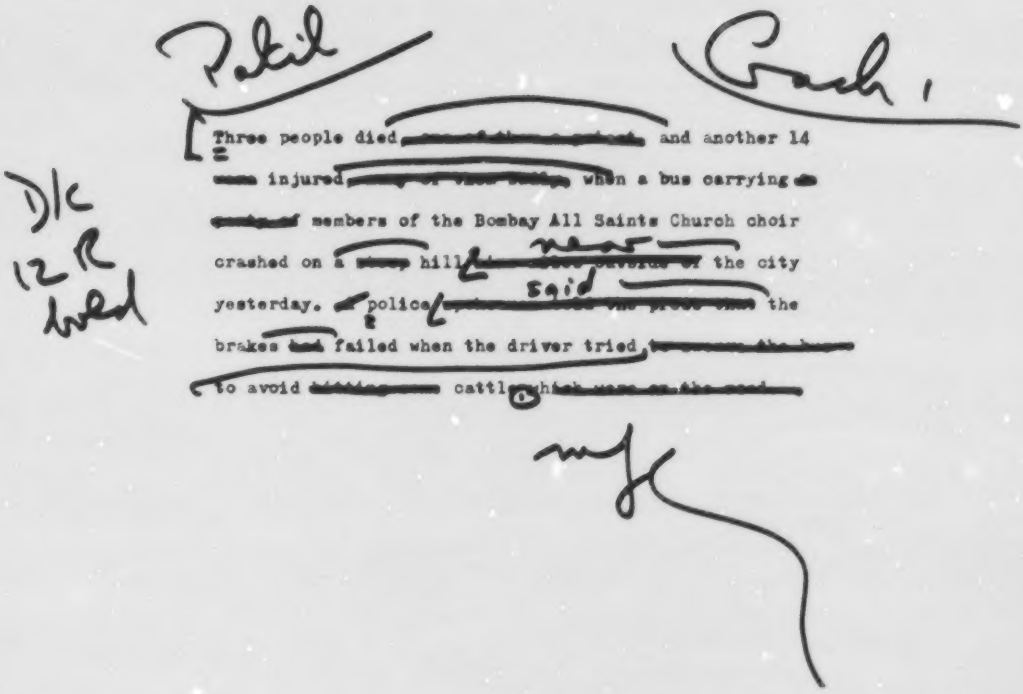
The intro as subbed.


Three people died and another 14
injured when a bus carrying
members of the Bombay All Saints Church choir
crashed on a hill
yesterday. police
brakes failed when the driver tried
to avoid cattle

What is news?

There are basically two types of news: spot news and diary news. Spot news is the unexpected; the plane crash, the fire, the coup, the sudden flood and the multitude of other things that are nearly always the most interesting news. Diary news is news which was known was going to happen: a speech by the prime minister, the visit of a foreign dignitary, the opening of a school.

More and more in the developing nations of the world imaginative editors are coming to realise that they will serve their readers and thus their newspaper well if they add a third type of news. This is news that encourages understanding of what is happening in the rural areas of their country rather than confining the news to the cities and towns where the papers are published. Let us have a look at the ingredients of a good news story, whatever category it comes into.

Timeliness: First of all the time element is important. News has to be new. The event itself may not be new but the discovery of it must be. There was a time, before the age of modern communications, when sometimes the biggest newspapers in the world did not report a major event for a week or more. Americans did not read about the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence until a week afterwards. Britain's defeat of the French Emperor Napoleon at Waterloo changed European history, but it was not reported until five days later. Today, when somebody fires bullets at the Pope the news reaches every newspaper of any size within minutes. The longest time gap in communications these days is human delay, the time it takes for the reporter to see what he is reporting, take notes and then write up his story.

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Proximity. It is only natural, though perhaps regrettably so, that most of us are much more interested about things in our own community than in some other place. If your wife breaks her arm you are far more concerned and interested in developments about it than you are in an earthquake killing hundreds in another continent. If a car crashes into the wall of your house you are much more interested than you are about the Jumbo jet which has crashed at London's Heathrow Airport. Events in your own town are generally more interesting than in the town 50 miles away. Newspapers cast their news-net first of all around the area in which they are published and in most developing countries this is usually the town in which they are published. After that, a poor second, comes the country at large, then neighbouring states and after that the world has to queue up to take its turn in the news columns.

Importance: Generally speaking the importance of a news story speaks for itself and the reporter rarely has to make much of a judgement about it But the good reporter will keep his mind tuned to what may be behind the news as he discovers it. There may have been a steep rise in the price of the country's staple food diet, let us say maize. An announcement is made by the ministry concerned which issues a press statement and a good many reporters would do no more than rehash that into a story they would give their news editor. A more imaginative reporter might add a few touches like interviewing average consumers to get their views and talk to traders to see what they thought about it and whether there is now likely to be less demand. But the really good reporter will probe deeper. Often his probing will unearth nothing but often, too, it will uncover the root cause of the news. In this case it could be that the price of maize has risen because of inefficiency or corruption or the failure of a farming project. His story thus becomes much more significant and important.

A reporter on the crime beat may learn about a murder. At first glance it seems no more than many other murders but if the reporter penetrates deeper he may discover it is linked with other murders and he is thus on to a first-class story.

But let us get back to the reporter working on a news story. He has been to the meeting or the scene of the fire or the robbed bank or the score of other places where news is made and he has gathered as many facts as he feels are necessary to write a good story. The "as many facts" is important to remember for rarely does the reporter need to gather every fact concerning the story. Experience will soon teach him that even the most important stories often have an abundance of surplus detail which would only make the finished story tedious and too long. This is certainly true of almost every speech ever made. A school of journalism in South East Asia recently gathered more than 100 speeches issued by ministries of information in more than a dozen neighbouring states. These speeches were made by presidents, prime ministers and senior cabinet ministers. Each speech was carefully analysed for its *news* content (that is, those parts of the speeches saying something new in the sense that some new information was being disclosed).

The students analysing the speeches bore in mind the need to give the heads of state or other particularly important ministers space to make the customary exhortations which form part and parcel of many such speeches but which are really not news. When all the analysing was finished each speech was presented on its merits. Not one contained more than a third of its original content; many ended up with considerably less than this. It is rare that a 5,000 word speech by anyone is worth more than 1,200 or 1,400 words when published in a newspaper. Clearly, if a newspaper is owned by the government or the editor feels obliged to cover such speeches much more fully than they may be worth then the reporter will do so. But let him not pretend that these speeches win their place in the newspaper on their news value.

Reporters have their living to earn and if they have to sometimes serve up such speeches by the political yard rather than by the news content then so be it.

Fortunately, reporting of political speeches is not the only job reporters get and in most stories they are able to exercise commonsense in deciding what to leave out. It is not always easy to decide what to leave out of a story. Court cases present a special difficulty. Suppose you have a particularly newsy court case in which the prosecution case is full of colourful evidence. It is very easy when writing the story to given undue space to the prosecution at the expense of what was said for the defence. It is only fair that the reporter should do so, however. If the habit of fairness is formed at the beginning of a reporter's career experience and habit will soon see that his stories are well balanced.

So let us get back to the reporter who has just returned from the story and is sitting in front of his typewriter going over his notes. In fact the experienced reporter will have done a fair amount of work towards the creation of the story on his way back to the office, whether he is walking or travelling by bus or car. The good reporter is turning over in his mind and sifting all that he has seen and heard and he is tackling the first and most important part of the story: the intro. It is probably true that the intro, or first paragraph, of a lot of stories brought into the office by reporters are constructed in the reporter's mind before he puts his copy paper into the typewriter.

The intro

If the intro to a story is not clear, straightforward and interesting then there is no point in writing anything else, for unless your reader is marooned somewhere and desperate to read anything, he will not read on. It is no use when reporters are challenged by their news editors that the intro is unclear saying that it all becomes clear a little later on in the story. Readers do not operate like that. If the first sentence of a story is not clear to them and even if it is clear but does not hold their interest because it is dull, they will not look lower down in the column. What they will do is to look at another story on the page. If this is no better they will turn the page.

A distinguished Indian editor once took a week away from his office and did nothing but watch people buying newspapers from the street sellers and then following them into buses or restaurants to watch how they read the paper. Even allowing for the fact that some of the people who bought the paper would undoubtedly have taken it home and perhaps given it a more thorough examination there, the editor made many important discoveries during his week away from the office. He found that the great majority of readers rarely spent more than a few minutes looking at the newspaper and only a relatively few stories were read from beginning to end.

For the most part the readers glanced over the pages and only if something caught their eye did they read on. Obviously the first things that caught their eye were the headlines to the stories and these will be dealt with later in the manual when we come to sub-editing, but even if the headline was inviting, if the intro immediately below it was not then the story was lost – or more accurately, the reader was lost.

So let us now have a close look at what an intro should contain and how it should be put together. First of all the length. Often the intro will consist of one smoothly flowing sentence of

not more than about 25 words. Very rarely will it contain more than two sentences, the second of which is an immediate elucidation of the first. The intro should seize upon the news point – that is, the most interesting thing – of the story. Often a very long story, full of exciting or important facts, will have one over-riding fact that should be singled out for the intro. In some instances it is possible to combine two or three separate facts into one sentence which can then become the intro, but no reporter will ever go wrong if he sticks to the formula of the most important or interesting single fact as his intro. The most common failing is when the intro to a story has too many facts for the reader to be able to digest them without mental indigestion.

You will often hear even experienced journalists say that the intro should answer the questions: Who? Why? What? Where? When? This is a sound rule for the news story but it cannot be applied to the intro. If the biggest danger in writting an intro is to include too many facts then there is another danger and that is not to include enough facts. It would be no good writing an intro like this:

There was a big fire in town yesterday.

This is certainly clear and concise, but it is a vacuum.

The proper intro would be:

Fire yesterday destroyed Suzuki's $10 million factory in the Industrial Area. Sixty firemen fought for 10 hours to bring the blaze under control.

The story would then run on with all the facts presented in order of importance and more or less chronologically. Obviously this would be a major story in any town and would probably account for a couple of full columns of the front page, plus pictures. How the fire started, just where in the factory it started, its likely cause and the score of other interesting details would, of course, be included later in the story.

But the essence of the whole story has been extracted and put into those two straightforward sentences which form the intro.

A good way for a reporter to test his intro is to imagine how he would tell his wife or his friends about what he had just seen or heard. Thus:

"The Suzuki factory has just burned down. They say the damage is 10 million dollars".

This is the sort of way ordinary people communicate with each other and that forms a sound nucleus for the way a reporter should try to communicate with his readers when he begins to tell his story in print.

There is another reason why an intro should be brief. A long intro set in type looks like a chunk of concrete and no more inviting. If the intro is so long that the reader has to, as it were, embark upon it rather than just swallow it whole it has failed.

Here is an intro with too many words and too many facts for easy digestion:

The biggest rail disaster in the history of Nigerian Railways occurred yesterday when a train travelling from Ibadan to Lagos came off the rails at a viaduct weakened by the recent heavy rains and crashed down an embankment to fall more than 90 metres into a gulley, killing at least 140 people and injuring scores more.

Although this intro is far too long it is at least fairly clear. But it would have been far better to have trimmed it thus:

More than 140 people were killed yesterday when a train careered off a viaduct between Ibadan and Lagos and fell into a gulley.

The news about the weakened viaduct, the recent heavy rains, the 90 metre crash, the history of Nigerian Railways and even the scores of injured can wait for a sentence or two.

Here is another long intro:

The Minister of Agriculture announced yesterday that because of severe flooding of farms and smallholdings in the Rift Valley a battalion of troops is to be sent to the area to help move people and their possessions and live-stock to safer areas on high ground.

Far better to have trimmed this to:

The Army is sending troops to move farmers and their animals out of the flooded Rift Valley.

The next sentence might read:

The troops will organise the evacuation of families and their goods to safe areas on high ground. This was announced yesterday by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Another example:

Barclays Bank in Kitwe was robbed of 40,000 kwacha by a gang of men who rushed into the building firing and killing two customers who were at the counter.

This would have been better:

Armed gangsters who stormed into Barclays Bank Kitwe yesterday shot dead two men and escaped with 40,000 kwacha.

Or another example:

Because of serious congestion of goods at Mombasa Docks, caused mainly by the three week strike of dockers for a 50 per cent wage rise, Kenya railways announced yesterday they are not accepting any cargo for the docks from up-country.

This would have been better:

Kenya Railways yesterday stopped accepting cargo for strike-bound Mombasa Docks.

Intros should not contain things like brackets and even punctuation marks like commas or semicolons should be avoided for the most part. All these things get in the way of the even flow of that vital first sentence, upon which the whole success of the story depends. For success will only be achieved if a reader is so impressed by the intro that he reads on into the story.

It is very difficult to make out any case for an intro beginning with reported speech set in inverted commas and yet newspapers do this time and time again. The main complaint about starting the story with quotation marks is that the reader has no idea who is speaking until the quotation marks are closed. Consider this:

"The West has to choose between doing business with the free nations of Africa or the tyrannical regime in South Africa" the President of Nigeria, Sehu Shagari, said yesterday.

President Shagari's quote is certainly newsy enough but it would have been far better to have used it in support of the first sentence of the intro, like this:

President Sehu Shagari of Nigeria yesterday warned that the West will have to choose between trading with the independent states of Africa or with South Africa. "They cannot go on doing both", he said.

Typographically, too, the opening quotation mark at the beginning of a column of type, particularly if the first paragraph is set in a type larger than the rest of the story, is distracting to the eye.

Something seems to happen to many reporters, particularly those at the beginning of their careers who are anxious to impress, when they sit down to write a story. It is as if they are saying to themselves: "I'll now demonstrate just what a smart chap I am". And they then dredge up long words and convoluted ideas which they should have left in their school lockers.

The good reporter is not trying to demonstrate anything other than that he has some important or interesting information. The skill is to communicate that as simply as possible. It is not a question of writing *down* to anybody and even if it is, it is far better to write down than to write *up* to a level above the heads of most people.

Another serious fault is in the assumption reporters often make that the readers will already know certain things about a situation This is particularly true when the story is dealing with something which is, in fact, already fairly well known like a continuing programme of flood relief or a court case which has been running for several days. Reporters should never assume the reader has read about this news before. Old hands in the business will sometimes say that you should write every story so that it can be understood by a man who has just arrived from the Moon. It is a good tip.

Apart from their role in the production of the paper, one of the principal functions of the sub-editor is that he is bringing a fresh mind to the story and thus can judge it for clarity and content without any personal bias. The good reporter will strive to judge his own stories as seen through the eyes of the reader who will shortly be buying the paper. Far too often reporters finish their story, glance hurriedly through it and hand it in. The good reporter should metaphorically take his shoes off when he has finished writing his story and put on the shoes of the *Man in the Biscuit Factory* who will be reading this story tomorrow morning. The reporter must ask himself whether the story has any unanswered questions, whether it can be understood at the first reading.

Building the story

If the intro is the right one then you have solved three-quarters of how to construct the rest of the story for, in essence, everything that follows the intro is a detailed explanation of the intro. It is really like an artist who will outline the shape of a portrait he is painting and then carefully fill in all the features. It is not too fanciful to say that reporters are artists with words.

Let us return to the story of the fire at the Suzuki factory. This was the intro suggested:

> **Fire yesterday destroyed Suzuki's $10 million factory in the Industrial Area. Sixty firemen fought for 10 hours to bring the blaze under control.**

How should the story then continue? Something like this, virtually a chronological report, would be perfectly sound:

> **The head storekeeper, Mr Sam Waruki, saw smoke billowing from the tyre store at 8 a.m. When he opened the store door he was nearly choked by the fumes from the burning rubber. Other workers pulled him away and the fire alarm was sounded.**
>
> **Men with fire extinguishers quickly appeared, broke the windows of the tyre store and tried to spray inside, but there was a sudden explosion and flames were seen coming through the roof.**
>
> **"The fire spread so quickly there was no chance" Mr James Taman, Suzuki's area manager, told reporters later. "Although we had 50 men with fire extinguishers doing what they could it was useless".**
>
> **Mr Taman said the city fire brigade had been called within a minute of the blaze starting and the first two tenders were at the factory within 15 minutes.**
>
> **He ordered the evacuation of the factory and the 200 workforce escaped without injury.**
>
> **As the two fire tenders fought the flames in the tyre store there was an explosion in the body-spraying department next to the tyre store and within a few minutes a strong wind had blown sparks and flaming paint to other buildings. Forty-two newly built vehicles and more than 100 partly built were destroyed.**
>
> **By the time eight other fire tenders from all over the city had arrived the two-acre factory was blazing.**
>
> **"I have never seen a fire spread so quickly" fire chief Titus Makupo said. "It was like an inferno. Our men could not get to the heart of the blaze".**
>
> **The clouds of thick black smoke and flames, which were 100 feet high, attracted crowds of early morning workers from all over the industrial area.**

There would be a lot more to report on this story but by now the reader is well into it and if he only read this far he would know virtually everything there was to know.

Notice how the story has been built up. First the essential facts in the intro, then a simple chronological development, colourful quotations brought in to heighten the detailing of the facts; short, crips sentences in an active voice to convey the drama.

Let us look even more closely at the story. The time of the outbreak is given; the number of employees and also the number of fire tenders is given; the time they took to arrive is stated. Before the story ended the time that the blaze was brought under control and then finally extinguished would also be given and the names of the people quoted are properly given – and properly means their first names, too. The storekeeper is Mr *Sam* Waruki. This is far better than Mr S. Waruki. The same thing is true of the other names in the story. You may think that it is hardly important, this difference between the initial and a name, but the difference between a good story and an indifferent one is often just three or four seemingly small things. Like the artist painting a portrait, a tiny brush stroke showing, for example, the gleam in the subject's eye, makes all the difference.

Of course, the reader does not think about these things; he does not say to himself "Ah! It is very good to have this man's first name". But psychologically he is left with a much more complete appreciation of things. The good reporter will constantly watch for this sort of detail.

Schools of journalism talk about a news story being composed like an inverted pyramid. This means that if you turn the pyramid on its head you have that broad base at the top. The broad base of a well written story is at the top, the intro, then the rest of the story following in a mixture of chronological order and importance so that the last sentences or paragraphs of the story are the least important.

There are two advantages in presenting the story in this inverted pyramid style. First, if the reader does not read to the end – and a remarkable number of readers do not – then they have still got the essential facts. And from a production point of view it is so much easier for the sub-editor, who will have to prepare the story to specific instructions of length, to be able to chop an inch or two right off the bottom of the story if he has to rather than remove a word here and a sentence there.

The exception to this inverted pyramid treatment of a news story is when a reporter has graduated to the more off-beat story, very often a light story, where for purposes of effect the news itself is held back.

Here is a delayed intro:

> **Fifteen year old Jimmy Patel woke up with itchy feet yesterday morning. So he set off on a 50 mile walk.**

So far this is a mystery and that is exactly what it is supposed to be, to whet the reader's appetite to read on, thus:

> **Jimmy was one of 150 teenagers who took part in a sponsored walk to raise funds for Bombay's new youth hostel.**

Provided you know what you are doing you can use the delayed intro on other types of stories. See examples under "Courts" on page 38.

Avoid at all costs intros like this:

> **With what he said would be his last comment on the matter . . .**

Who is 'he'? Do not inflict your readers with this sort of stuff.

Just as bad is this:

Relieved that the OAU Summit had reached agreement on their attitude to the Ogaden crisis, the foreign ministers are today to consider . . .

Far easier to simplify it thus:

After reaching agreement on the Ogaden crisis, foreign ministers of the OAU are to . . .

Always the first rule is clarity and simplicity. Reporters should always, of course, read their copy through when they have completed writing it but the good reporter will read his intro through almost aloud to himself to see whether it "comes off the tongue" easily. Get into this habit.

Tenses frequently cause a problem in intros. It can be confusing to use the past tense in an intro, like this:

President Arap Moi said yesterday that the policy of his government was to see democracy installed in South Africa.

By using "was to see" a question mark might be raised in the reader's mind, suggesting that this is no longer his policy. Much better to put it this way:

President Arap Moi said yesterday that the policy of his country is to see democracy in South Africa.

Once you are into the story, past the intro, it makes easier reading to use the past tense when quoting in the third person. For example, a speaker might say:

"I am in favour of interest-free loans for farmers in the drought areas because I have seen the struggle they are having"

In the third person this would be better:

He said he was in favour of interest-free loans for farmers in the drought areas because he had seen the struggle they were having.

The temptation to colour-up a story, particularly a dramatic story like a fire, should always be resisted, letting the facts speak for themselves. Notice how in the fire story we have not sent the fire engines *careering through the city* with their *alarms clanging*. It would be a very curious fire brigade that did not clang its bells as it went to a fire! Neither do we turn the factory into a "blazing inferno". Somebody called it "an inferno" and this is fair enough if you are quoting but when describing the scene either use "inferno" or "blazing". The good dramatic story does not need colouring up. One has to be honest and admit that there are some stories where a few colourful adjectives are needed. Political meeting often fall into this category where things get rather lively but at all times, even when very exciting things are happening, the reporter should strive to describe what has happened in a straightforward way.

Cliches

It is almost pointless to warn reporters to avoid cliches, but nevertheless it is a message that should be hammered home at every opportunity. The problem is, just what is a cliche? Here are a few to be going on with:

blow by blow	last but not least
bitter end	long years
crying need	marked contrast
each and every	powder keg
flash in the pan	over and above
fair sex	true colours
interesting to note	matter of life and death
doctors fought	acid test

There are hundreds more. They are all the refuge of the reporter too weary to practise his craft with care and thought.

Reporters should try to alert themselves to spot cliches in their copy and take them out before handing the story in.

As bad as cliches is jargon and the more complex the world gets the more jargon seems to be invented by everybody from academics to scientists – and even journalists themselves. Jargon is the specialist language which particular groups of people use in their own trades or professions. It is most noticeable in handouts. Fortunately, jargon is easier to eradicate than it is to avoid cliches. The reporter should train himself to spot jargon and then translate it into terms that can be understood by *The Man in the Biscuit Factory*. Hand in hand with jargon is that other cancer of language – officialese. With this complaint no-one is "sent to hospital"; they are "hospitalised"; a house can even become a "domicilary unit".

Here is a typical example of the sort of bureaucratic gobbledegook that newspapermen are being beseiged with from official sources every day of the week. It comes from the statistical office of the Philippines National Economic Council.

> It should be pointed out here that clear-cut dividing lines between two or more processes as existing in highly-developed countries are often absent in under-developed countries like the Philippines, therefore, dividing lines should be defined clearly wherever possible to avoid confusion, while at the same time, observing the principles adopted by the United Nations in the preparation of the International Standard Classification of All Economic Activities.

If you now put your hand over that piece of prose could you answer questions on what it means?

When a reporter is interviewing someone who uses jargon the reporter does not understand (for example, a scientist explaining some complicated technicality) he should not take refuge in playing safe by scrupulously ensuring that at least he has the correct spelling of the particular term or word which he does not understand. If the reporter does not understand something then there is certainly no hope for *The Man in the Biscuit Factory*.

The bad reporter is afraid to reveal his ignorance by asking the specialist to explain the terms in language that can be understood by the average man, but this is exactly what he has to do. When a reporter is interviewing someone who says something, or uses terms which are not

absolutely clear, the reporter must say: "Could you please put that in words which the average reader of my paper will understand". The reporter who says that is not displaying his ignorance; he is displaying his skill.

During a seminar on economic reporting held in Jamaica the question of financial and economic jargon came up and several Caribbean journalists said that they very often resorted to printing something from a hand-out or an official statement on economics which they frankly did not understand. Rather than miss the story they just "put it in as it is". These Caribbean journalists must have been startled when a leading financial journalist from possibly the most prestigious financial publication in the world, *The Financial Times*, of London, admitted that he, too, was sometimes guilty of the same offence. But it is still very bad practise.

Good spelling is primarily a matter of remembering. No reporter is going to get very far in his career if he is bad at spelling for if he cannot spell he almost certainly does not know the meaning of many of the words he cannot spell. He thus has a smaller supply of words upon which to draw than he will often need in his work, for though the skeleton of every story should be of simple, concise and preferably short words, much of the flesh on the skeleton will need to be made up of other words. Listed below are a selection of words frequently mis-spelled and almost as frequently mis-used. Test yourself on them.

Accommodation	Humorous
Acquiescence	Hysterical
Annihilate	Incoherency
Asphyxiate	Innocuous
Benefited	Jeopardise
Carburettor	Loquacious
Cemetery	Manoeuvre
Connoisseur	Meanness
Corpuscle	Miscellaneous
Debatable	Noticeable
Descendant	Occurred
Destructible	Profession
Discreet	Proprietary
Eligibility	Recommend
Emissary	Reconnaissance
Exhilaration	Resuscitate
Fallacious	Separate
Fulfilling	Supersede
Haemorrhage	Unnecessary
Harassed	Vociferous

Be wary of abstract words. These are words that mean different things to differet people and are used by different societies in different ways. The word 'democracy' means one thing in the 'free' world and another thing in the 'totalitarian' world. It would be a very brave man who could run his pencil down the list of all the countries in the world and tell you which ones were 'democratic', which were 'totalitarian' and which were 'free'.

But it is not just with international issues that vague words get in the way of good reporting. The word 'crime' is a vague word. It may range all the way from spitting on the pavement to murder. 'Tragedy' is one of the most common overworked vague words. Where does an accident end and a tragedy begin? If a bus mounts the pavement and crashes into a shop window that, presumably, is an accident. If it kills a mother and two children that, presumably, is a tragedy. If the bus merely injures the mother and two children, is *that* a tragedy?

'Injured' is another easy-way-out vague word. For example:

The police sergeant's head was injured in the riot.

Does this mean it was cut, scratched, crushed? Whenever you can, be precise. Say the police sergeant's skull was fractured; say the bus hit the mother and her two children and the hospital said they had received cuts to the legs and bodies. Abstract words make writing dull and vague. News reporting should be crisp and clear.

Punctuation

If the reporter writes straightforward, simple sentences which on the whole are shorter rather than longer he will have much less trouble with punctuation. Punctuation is supposed to make reading easier but if the writing is already easy to read there will be less need for punctuation.

The most important punctuation marks are: the comma, the semicolon, the colon and the full-stop.

The comma: There are more commas used that any other punctuation mark and many of them are superfluous. A comma replaces the word **and** to separate a series of words. Like this:

A reporter should ensure that his stories are clear, concise, easy to read and accurate.

A comma is essential in words or phrases such as: in fact, nevertheless, however, for instance. A comma should be used in words or phrases in apposition (and if you dont't know what the word "apposition" means look it up in the dictionary).

Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia, has five children.

In complex sentences (which reporters should strive to avoid) commas are used to support:

(a) qualifying phrases

In view of your attitude, I shall have to tell the editor.

(b) subordinate, non-defining clauses

The editor, sweating in his shirt sleeves, worked all night.

The colon and semi-colon: There is a pretty fine difference between these two. The semi-colon marks a longer pause than that indicated by a comma while the colon indicates an even longer pause than the semi-colon. The semi-colon is most useful in double sentences where there is no conjunction.

Rumours spread that the army had mutined; the crowd believed it.

The principal function of the colon in newspapers is that it should always be used before opening quotes.

The prime minister said: "This is a very good result".

The colon is also useful if you are listing things in a story.

Kimathi sold everything: his house, his car, his furniture and even his clothes.

A colon should also be used to distinguish between two co-ordinate clauses where the second explains the first.

Keep your stories simple: they read more easily.

The fullstop: It may be rather trite to say that a fullstop denotes the end of a sentence but it is certainly not trite to try to explain just what a sentence is. A sentence is a complete thought completely expressed in words. Yet again, you will write a good sentence much more easily if you make a conscious effort to keep it short. There are plenty of excellent one word sentences. Here are a few:

Yes.
No.
Rubbish!

All these three words are complete thoughts, completely expressed.

Exclamation marks: There are far too many exclamation marks in newspapers. There can hardly be any properly written news story in which an exclamation mark is justified, for an exclamation mark is really a comment; it is saying: "Isn't this remarkable?" There are certainly far too many exclamation marks scattered around by sloppy subs in headlines.

Ninety dead in plane crash!
Price of sugar doubled!

Let the reader decide whether he thinks those two statements are remarkable or not. In their news columns newspapers should print news and an exclamation mark is adding the newspaper's views to the news.

Brackets are a bad habit though sometimes useful. A dash can generally do the same job and is better on the eye because it keeps the sentence moving while brackets tend to hold it up.

In the section of this manual dealing with intro writing this sentence appears:

The intro should seize upon the news point – that is, the most interesting thing – in the story.

The words between the dashes would looked rather awkward had they been in brackets, but there is no hard and fast rule. Reporters should be wary of both brackets and dashes.

The hyphen, or short dash, is used

(a) in compound nouns
e.g. brother-in-law

(b) in compound titles
e.g. secretary-general

(c) in compound nouns which are made up of verbs and propositions
e.g. get-together, call-up

(d) in compound adjectives
e.g. a mean-minded thief

(e) to link numbers
e.g. sixty-six

Interviewing

Good interviews are not so much a lost art in many newspaper offices as an art that was never grasped in the first place. And yet a good interview brings the story alive. It certainly does so when the story is hard news, in the sense that it is something that has just happened and the reporter is seeking accounts of it from witnesses. But it is also very rarely you see a properly conducted interview of a personality who is supposed to have something interesting or important to say.

These are the two types of interview; the witness to a piece of hard news who the reporter will come across in the course of the story and the set-piece interview which has to be arranged beforehand. Let us look at the former first.

Take the average hard news story, like a bus crash. The reporter gets to the scene of the accident, sees for himself the outcome of it but requires something more than a statement of the facts. He thus looks around for somebody who was there when the accident happened. Most people, educated or not, are either not very articulate in describing something, or else they are prone to exaggerate, particularly if they are in a somewhat emotional state having just seen a 60-seater bus career down a hill and go through a shop window. The reporter should strive to get the colour of the story but without the emotion of the witness. There is a fine but important line between the two. There is also often a very important legal line which the reporter must be wary he does not overstep. A report of a bus crash in the Philippines is a classic in how not to do it. The reporter quoted a witness to the accident – and even more unforgiveable, the sub handling the story let it through – saying: "The driver was like a madman. I think he must have been drunk".

Drunk or not the driver, having first demonstrated in court that his brakes had failed and that he had done all he could to minimise the accident, subsequently sued the newspaper and collected the equivalent of about three years' salary. The reporter is no longer in journalism and the sub should not be, either.

The law affecting newspapers is dealt with later but no opportunity should be allowed to pass without driving home the dangers of defamation which face every newspaper every day.

Libel apart, the reporter interviewing a witness in such a story should use his commonsense and if at all possible try to cross-check any facts he gets from such sources. For example, if somebody tells you the bus turned over six times it is extremely doubtful whether it did so. Even if somebody says it only turned over twice, ask a couple of other by-standers for their views. Avoid leading questions when you are interviewing witnesses of incidents you are going to write about. Do not say to the bus accident witness: "It must have been a fantastic sight to see this bus roaring down the hill out of controll and crash through the shop window". The person you have just put this question to may reply by no more than a nod or an inarticulate "Ahaa". You cannot then write in your copy:

> Joseph Serowe told me: "It was a fantastic sight to see this bus roaring down the hill out of control and crash through the shop window".

This may not be legally dangerous (though it may well be) but it is just bad reporting.

Obviously reporters are almost constantly in a situation of having to put **something like** leading questions to people they are interviewing and it is impossible to draw any hard and fast line as to how far such questions should go. But the reporter who is genuinely trying to get a balanced report will be very careful about this technique.

Only experience will tell you when you should brandish a notebook during an interview and when you should not. Many people, from the lowliest to the highest, get very uneasy when they see a reporter flourishing a pencil over his notebook ready, it seems, to commit every word to print. Generally speaking, with hard news of the accident variety, it is better to do your interviewing without a notebook but immediately you have finished interviewing one person turn aside and make a quick note of what they have said before going on to the next.

With the other type of interview that has been pre-arranged, a totally different technique is required. The person you are going to interview knows you are coming to see him and *should* thus be much more receptive if you produce a notebook. But again, it is often prudent to be discreet with your note-taking. Certainly avoid sitting there with the open notebook on your knee and the pencil poised over it. This is very off-putting for the person you are talking to. With not too much practise it should be possible to master the technique of having your notebook and pencil almost casually in one hand, perhaps hanging at your side, as you sit with the person you are interviewing and just from time to time, as you sit talking, to jot down the important things which you will need when you start writing the interview up.

You will often not need this approach. If you are interviewing, say, the leader of a foreign trade delegation who is very anxious to get into print, you can brandish your notebook as much as you like. But if you are interviewing a politician or a leading trade unionist who, you hope, will say something really worth giving your readers in tomorrow's paper then even though the subject of the interview should have prepared what he is proposing to say to you he may well think again if the note taking is not done with some discretion.

There is far too much quoting of banalities which must just bore the readers stiff. Newspaper readers in, say, Kingston, Jamaica, or Accra, Ghana, really do not want to read that the leader of a British trade delegation said yesterday: "I am very happy to be in your country and I believe there are mutual opportunities for both sides in what we hope to achieve". Just because people talk like this does not mean that we have to put it in the newspaper.

One of the greatest faults with a set-piece interview is the lack of preparation reporters make. Far too often a reporter is ticked off on the news diary for the day to meet such and such a person and interview him on such and such a subject. Or he may be told by the news editor that a

minister has agreed to be interviewed about, let us say, loans to farmers. Far too often the reporter just trots along and presents himself like a sponge prepared to absorb anything and everything he is told. Without preparation of self-briefing he is totally unqualified to do more than listen and take notes. This is not reporting and it is not interviewing. The reporter who behaves like this would be much better seeking a job as a shorthand-typist.

Briefing

Briefing is essential for set-piece interviews. Reporters should brief themselves on both the subject which is likely to form the story and also the person to be interviewed. Let us assume that you have been told by your news editor that the chairman of the trade union council will be making a statement about new wage rates the council will be putting to the government next week. Here are the elementary steps the reporter should take: first of all he should find out what the current wage agreement between the TUC and the government is; when it was negotiated and how successful it has been (e.g. have there been many strikes during the period of the agreement?). All this information should be on file in the newspaper library. Sadly, sometimes it is not. If it is not then the reporter should make enquiries from the TUC office. He should not wait to ask until he meets the TUC chairman. Unless the reporter is exceptionally quick-witted he will be unable to plan the questions in the light of what he has uncovered if he waits for the chairman to answer his questions about the history of the wage agreement.

For example, going through the newspaper cuttings about the TUC since the last agreement, he may have found that notwithstanding the agreement one or two unions have been taking independent lines and are in breach of certain aspects of the agreement. The obvious question he will ask the chairman when he sees him is why these unions have acted as they have, why attempts to discipline them by the TUC committee have failed and more particularly how reasonable is it for the central committee of the TUC to try to make another agreement with government with the history of broken promises behind them?

These are all elementary questions, but they would not have arisen had the reporter not done his homework first. Notwithstanding the fact that many newspapers are either owned or have considerable influence exercised on them by government, a good reporter should still be able to tread the admittedly delicate path of closely questioning a government minister or senior civil servant. Reporters are likely to get far more respect if they make it apparent that they know what they are talking out.

One of Africa's most distinguished politicians, Kenya's Mwai Kibaki, has complained about this very thing. So often, he said, reporters "just do not do their homework".

It is also well worthwhile for the reporter to try to unearth some personal or personality details about the man or woman he is to interview. If you are interviewing the minister of agriculture about a loan programme for rural farmers it adds colour and warmth to the story if you are able to say that the minister's first job was as a barefoot herd-boy: if you are interviewing the matron-in-chief of the hospitals service the story will come alive much better if you reveal that when her

parents died she had to work 18 hours a day as a housemaid for two different families to bring up her eight brothers and sisters.

The imaginative reporter will constantly be seeking these offbeat touches. Something as seemingly dull as the visit of a Japanese trade delegation was turned into a very readable story – and not much to do with trade – when the day before the mission was due in Lagos a reporter telephoned the Japanese Embassy and really got his teeth into the sleeve of the commercial attache, trying to shake out something human. At first the commercial attache was only interested in the official aspect of the mission and he hardly understood the questions the reporter asked about the personal hobbies of the members.

"I do not know their hobbies" he replied rather testily. "They are very important men. They will not have time for hobbies". But the reporter persisted and finally it was revealed that the leader of the mission had once been the table-tennis champion of Japan. Result: the reporter produced a story angled on this and it must have made the reporters of all the other papers who produced competent, but rather staid stories about trade, blush with embarrassment.

Clearly you will not seek human touches like this in every story. There is a time and place for everything. But be constantly on the look-out for such angles.

A page or two ago reporters who just soaked up information like sponges were advised they would be better off seeking jobs as shorthand typists. The only trouble would be that far too few reporters have sufficient shorthand, or any at all, to seek such jobs.

Shorthand – or electronics?

There are two schools of thought about shorthand for reporters and they are diametrically opposed; those who believe it is essential and those who say that "in this modern age" (whatever that means) you really do not need it. It has to be admitted that there are plenty of good reporters on some of the biggest newspapers in the world who do not have shorthand – or certainly their shorthand is not nearly good enough to take down more than a few brief notes. Here we come to perhaps the biggest divide between the press in the so-called developing world and newspapers in societies already well developed. Much of the press in well developed societies has evolved almost into an entertainment media. There is nothing wrong with entertaining readers. Entertainment is *one* of the ingredients of any newspaper. But when the whole projection of a newspaper is geared to entertainment there is rarely room for the more serious or thorough reporting which very often necessitates lengthy first-person reporting where shorthand is absolutely essential.

Reporters in less developed societies should make an effort to occasionally see newspapers from the so-called developed world. It is not always easy to get hold of them but a little persistence at places like the British Council, the United States Information Service (USIS) or the foreign embassies will generally produce something. And you will not need to be able to read the language of the country like France or Germany, whose newspapers you may be studying, to get the flavour of the sort of journalism they practise.

The best "how not to do it" study of newspapers any serious-minded journalist in a developing society can do would be Britain's *Sun*, West Germany's *Bild* and the United States' *New York Daily News*. There are plenty of others all over the so-called developed world but no newspaperman who believes that the press has an essential role in improving the life of his community would go far wrong by studying these papers to see exactly how journalism should not be practised.

Equally, some of the best newspapers in the world are produces in these countries: London's *The Times*, West Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine* and *The New York Times*.

You would not think that these newspapers came from the same planet as their stable-mates. Apart from the whole conception of what a newspaper should be, the difference between the first three and the second three is that you will find plenty of evidence in the latter of reporting which would not have been possible without first-class shorthand reporters. How any reporter can go to an important criminal trial or civil case without good shorthand is a mystery. It is the same with important, or even not very important, political meetings and meetings of almost any group the news editor considers it worthwhile to send a reporter to.

A few years ago, when the electronic age began to take off, the no-shorthand-school took refuge in the argument that, really, tape-recorders were much more satisfactory. They just are not. They are useless for court reporting, for even if they were strong enough to pick up what was being said in a witness box possibly 20 feet away from the press table, it is highly improbable the magistrate or judge would allow them to be used.

The same is true in parliament, and even if they were strong enough to pick up at a distance and were allowed, all they would pick up would be a gabble of different speakers who were totally unidentifiable when the tape was played back. As for using tape-recordings on hard news stories, it is totally impractical. Even if in rare circumstances it was practical to use a tape-recorder, such as interviewing witnesses of a fire or an accident, it is just not good sense to shove microphones in front of people and fiddle about with switches. Even if the people you are interviewing are not put off or inhibited by such a practise, when the reporter gets back to his office he then has the whole business of re-winding the tape and tediously playing it over to select those quotes he wants. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the city, the reporter from the opposition paper has flicked over the page of his notebook and selected the quotations he wants quickly and easily.

For when you are taking notes on such stories you only take those notes that appeal to you. If you have shoved a tape-recorder in somebody's face you are committed to recording every longwinded, meaningless, irrelevant word, every inarticulate "ah", "er" and all the other noises most of us make when speaking.

The only case that can begin to be made out for tape-recorders is in the pre-arranged, set-piece interview held in ideal conditions such as in a quiet office.

Kenya's *Sunday Nation* was probably the pioneer in Africa of the in-depth interview using a tape-recorder. Every week for almost a generation they have selected an interesting personality, either local or visiting the country, and put him or her *On the Carpet*, the name they give to the feature. The reporter conducting the interview, who is always a very senior man and well experienced at the technique, has the tape-recorder on the table and is thus able to conduct the interview without any interruptions for note-taking. The theory is fine and most of the time it works very well – though it is still a lengthy business transcribing every word and then selecting the fairly small proportion that will appear in the paper. But it does not always work. The editor of this manual was the subject of a 90-minute such interview but the next day a slightly embarrassed reporter telephoned him and announced: "I am afraid the tape-recorder was not working properly. Can we do it again?"

Courts – and the law

The biggest dangers confronting newspapers, notwithstanding threats from politicians, are the laws of libel and defamation. It is absolutely paramount that a reporter should thoroughly understand the law of libel. For that matter, it is also extremely important that he should know a good deal about other aspects of the law of his country, particularly as it affects the constitution. But it is the law of libel that hangs like a sword of Damocles over every newspaper office. And far too often the sword swoops down with frightening effect. It is up to the editor of a newspaper to ensure that his editorial staff and even the staff handling advertising for the newspaper, are kept up-to-date with the law.

Many reporters seem to think that provided they preface the most outrageous statements with the word "alleged" then they are safe. This is rubbish so far as stories outside of the courtroom are concerned.

If you write:

> It was alleged yesterday that three cabinet ministers were plotting to overthrow the government.

This is about as big a defamation as you could imagine.

Time and time again reporters tell angry editors who have just had a writ for defamation served upon them because of a story in the paper: *"But this is what I was told"*. This is absolutely no defence.

The laws of libel and defamation vary, of course, from country to country so there can be no overall guidance, but one thing is certain: at the barest minimum anything reported about anybody must be true. That does not mean the reporter must merely truly report what somebody else said. The *facts* must be true.

With news stories other than court reports a simple test to which the reporter should submit himself when he has written something about somebody is to ask: "If I were this person would I like to read this about me?" If the answer is "No" then he should ponder long and hard before he proceeds with the story. If the answer is "No" but nonetheless the reporter feels strongly that the statement is not only true but that it is in the public interest that it should be printed then he should at the very least consult his news editor. It is not fair, nor is it professional, to leave questionable stories of this nature for the subs to sort out after the reporter has gone home. It is not part of a sub-editor's duty to assume responsibility cast-off by sloppy reporters.

The words "in the public interest" are an English legal maxim which have formed the basis for the laws of libel and defamation in many other countries, particularly those that were once British possessions. What the words really mean is that unpleasant though the facts may be and embarrasing though they will be for the person named in the story, the greater concern is the public good. If, for example, a story unearths facts showing that a building firm has been deliberately charging the ministry of works for materials it has not, in fact, used, then even though the disclosure of this is fraught with danger for the newspaper, provided the newspaper is satisfied that the facts are true and can be shown to be true then it is clearly in the public interest that the story should be published.

Many reporters seem to confuse what is "in the public interest" with what is "interesting to the public". There is a world of difference between the two. Obviously what is "in the public interest" is also interesting to the public or no newspaper would want to publish it anyway, but

there are many things which may be of interest to people which are not remotely in the public interest, in the sense that it is important they should know about it because of the public good.

For example, it could be argued that many people might find it very interesting that a prominent personality is caught climbing out of the bedroom window of the wife of another prominent personality. But the disclosure of that information is not going to help society one bit.

But probably the greatest libel dangers for newspapers arise through bad court reporting. The journalists' cemetery is full of the bones of reporters who made messes of court stories. Not only must a court report be scrupulously accurate but it should also be fairly balanced, giving as much room, or at least reasonable room to the defence case as to the prosecution case.

The two most common causes for libel are in the reporting of the plea and the wording of the charge. Too many reporters are constantly treading the dangerous path of trying to colour-up cases with descriptive writing, but if you go too far you are in serious trouble. A man charged with rape in a West African state was described in the first day's newspaper report of the trial as "evil-looking". After he was found not guilty of rape he sued the paper (or more particularly a sharp-eyed lawyer suggested he should act for him) and collected more money than the editor of the offending newspaper earned in a year. It is far safer to stick to the facts.

Here are a few basic rules for court reporters to follow:

1. Never be late for a case. It is dangerous to start reporting a case which has already started. If you are late make very sure you find out what has happened before you got there.

2. It is much more important for the court reporter to carefully follow the case, almost as if he were a member of the jury, than to take copious notes which then have to be sorted out. It is a highly skilled task but as with every other form of reporting the court reporter should only take notes of those parts of the case which are important and interesting.

3. When a witness is being examined or cross-examined concentrate on his answers rather than on the questions being asked.

4. Be very wary of using direct quotes unless they are the exact words that came out of somebody's mouth, particularly the accused's. Never abbreviate quotes and leave them in quotes. It is much safer to abbreviate in the third person.

5. Never guess, never assume, never take chances.

6. Never be afraid to ask afterwards, from either the defence or prosecuting counsel or a court official, to clear up something you are not sure of.

Many years ago a London evening newspaper, now ceased publication, had so many libel actions arising from "bright" intros written by enthusiastic reporters that they finally resorted to beginning every court case in the same staid, dreary but perfectly safe manner like this:

At Bow Street Magistrates Court today John Smith (46) a bricklayer of London Road, Hackney, was charged with stealing a bus belonging to London Transport.

It is sad when frightened newspaper editors have to resort to stuff like this but it is better to be dull and safe than bright and dangerous.

Providing the reporter knows what he is doing court cases should be tackled in exactly the same manner as other stories, beginning with the most interesting aspect of the case. Very often it is not even necessary to mention in the intro it is a court case at all. Look at this:

> **Every time Simon Tafewa, accountant at the Freetown Trading Company, was asked by the manager for the keys of the safe he said they were lost. Finally a locksmith was sent for and he forced open the safe. It was empty.**

That would be a perfectly good intro for a court case, the second paragraph of which would then continue:

> **Yesterday Tafewa was sent to prison for four years for stealing 6,000 leones from the company. He pleaded guilty at the City Court to robbing the company over a period of two years.**

Here is another example of a court story where the reporter has written the off-beat, much more interesting intro than the mere setting of the story within the court.

> **The day after returning from a holiday in Britain, 26 year old Ellie Warithu drove her car northwards down Independence Avenue. She hit a bus, two cyclists and finally ended up with her front wheels through a shop window.**
>
> **What she did not know was that while she had been away on holiday, Independence Avenue had been turned into a one-way street – and she had been going up it the wrong way.**

There has been no mention of a court case yet but the story could now continue:

> **Yesterday she pleaded guilty to reckless driving. She told the City Magistrate, Mr Charles Lotice: "I just could not understand what was happening. It was very frightening".**

It is a question of practise to master this technique but it is not particularly difficult and court cases certainly come alive much better this way.

But when you have finished writing you story, whatever form of intro you have gone for, read the whole story back with great care. There is still plenty of room in the cemetery for reporters who don't!

Speeches

Speeches are generally the most uninteresting way of imparting information. The real content of a speech – that is, the revelation of anything new which the audience does not already know – is just a tiny proportion of the speech. Many speeches, of course, do not have anything new to

say at all. And yet newspapers all over the world continue to give undue space to speeches, whether from politicians, officials or anybody else.

What journalists should remember is that a speech is designed to be heard and not read, so a reporter reporting a speech should attune himself to the fact that there is likely to be very little news in it anyway and even if there is any news it may be wrapped up in so much verbiage that it would be almost meaningless if served up in the newspaper the same way.

Whether reporting a speech or whether re-writing it from a hand-out, the first thing a reporter should bear in mind is that it should not be tackled in the order in which it is presented; that is, do not necessarily start your story with the first part of the speech and then take the other parts in the order in which they were presented by the speaker. The most interesting element should form the intro and thereafter the other parts of the speech should be presented in order of interest and/or importance. Politicians, particularly, even when they have something to say, rarely make speeches presenting the facts in order of importance.

Budget speeches are a typical example of the way that important news is often wrapped-up in blankets of verbosity. Reporters should strip bare all the cliches with which most speeches are impregnated; the "arising out of", "for the purpose", "as a matter of fact". There are dozens more and they should never appear in newspapers.

This is the way that speeches should be reported:

First the intro which gives the most important news point. Sometimes the news point will stand on its own; other times it may include the source of the news, i.e. who the speaker is. For example, if the minister of finance has just presented his budget in which the main news point is that the basic wage is to be increased by 50 per cent, a good first sentence would be:

> **The minimum wage is being increased by 50 per cent. This was announced yesterday by Mr Ruben Kamanga, the Minister of Finance. He was presenting the budget for the coming year.**

Notice how this consists of three short sentences.

Every man in every Biscuit Factory in the world will be able to understand it.

But the intro could also have been:

> **The minimum wage is to be increased by half, Mr Ruben Kamanga, Minister of Finance, announced yesterday when he presented the budget.**

A lot of subs would prefer the first version. Having written such an intro it is good practice to get into a direct quote fairly quickly. This brings the story alive rather than leaving it as a piece of cold officialese.

For example, the next paragraph after the intro could be:

> **"With inflation as high as it is, it is unfair to expect workers to have to manage on the low wages they have been used to for far too long", said Mr Kamanga.**

Only experience and constant self-examination by a reporter of his own work will show how direct speech and third person speech should be mixed in a story. Too much of either first person or third person should be avoided.

Unless paragraphs are very short, direct speech should never go beyond two paragraphs before a break in the style into third person or some other means of changing the pattern.

A good way of reporting a speech is to reserve direct speech for the really important quotations or, occasionally, when the speaker coins a colourful phrase which is worth using direct. There can be no hard and fast rules but with a 15 paragraph story of a speech occupying about the same number of single column inches, a fairly good pattern would be that only about a third would be in direct quotes, and those spread more or less evenly over the whole report, with the rest in third person plus a description of the circumstance in which the speech was made.

Reporters should be as careful about third person summaries as they should be about direct quotations.

While a direct quotation must, of course, be the exact words which came from the speaker's mouth, the reporter has a great deal of latitude in summarising in the third person. But be wary of using terms like "attacked", "criticised", "rebuked" or any other observations about the speech. Let the speaker's words, or the fair summary you have made of his words, speak for themselves. If you start commenting on the speech you are no longer a reporter but a commentator. Obviously there are occasions when it will be reasonable to use all of the terms quoted above, but the point is that before reporters put their toe into this water they should be very sure what they are doing.

Apart from stripping speeches of the wordiness which most are full of, *because they are designed to be heard by a live audience*, reporters should avoid like the plague highlighting some of the trite banalities which politicians all over the world, are fond of.

Here is a particularly bad intro:

"I will fight apartheid until my dying day", President Kenneth Kaunda said yesterday.

No doubt to the huge crowd he was addressing in a football stadium this was quite a proper comment. But in the cold light of the next morning's dawn it looked as flat as yesterday's beer when presented in print. If, however, President Kaunda declares:

"I will support apartheid to my dying day"

then that would be a real intro!

Apart from anything else, it is unfair for reporters to present quotes like this. Much better to put the quote in the third person and in a way that more fairly represents the context in which it was made. It requires considerable skill to capture the subtleties of a speech in print.

All over the world there seems to be an aversion on the part of otherwise quite good reporters to using the simple, direct word "said" when reporting a speaker. They may use the word "said" the first time they quote a speaker but thereafter they seem to twist themselves into every convolution imaginable to avoid "said".

You get this sort of thing: . . . *he added.* Then a little later in the story you will often see: . . . *he went on to say.* Another old favourite is: *turning to the question of* . . . or *referring to the* . . .

Much, much better to have continued with the simple word "said. When this is pointed out to reporters they reply "But I have already used the word twice". This does not matter two hoots. Just because a reporter has given birth to a story and is concerned to see it launched

properly into the world does not mean tomorrow morning's readers are going to examine every word with the same care that he employed when he wrote the story. Newspapers readers just want to know what people *said*.

If there are a number of different points dealt with in the same story then here is quite a good way to get round the problem if you really do not feel able to follow the above advice:

The President made the follows points:

- SOUTH AFRICA: "We will help everyone who opposes apartheid".

- FOREIGN AID: "We are not too proud to accept help, but we are too proud to take help tied with strings".

This is also quite a good way of summarising a long-winded or dull speech.

In an ideal world in which all journalists were thoroughly professional there would be no such thing as "journalistic licence". It is a phrase you often hear. Its meaning is never very clear. Far too often it is used as an excuse for gross exaggeration and no journalist worth the name should ever indulge in this. But it has to be admitted that provided that this licence is kept on a very tight rein it is often useful to employ. Let us have a look at just how far journalistic licence should be allowed to go. Here is one intro:

Police Commissioner Charles Robero said yesterday that half the number of people being arrested by the police were under the age of 16.

That is what the Police Commissioner said. Here is the intro which another reporter gave to that statement:

Half the criminals in the country are under the age of 16. This was said yesterday by Police Commissioner Charles Robero.

But there is a difference between the two statements. The Police Commissioner said that half of those *being arrested* are under the age of 16. This is not the same as saying that half the criminals *in the country* are under that age. Perhaps if the police were able to arrest every criminal in the country they would end up with a very different situation.

But the reporter who used the second intro is in pretty good company. Newspapers are doing this sort of thing all over the world. The correct way to present the facts if you take this much licence in your intro is shortly afterwards to quote exactly what the Police Commissioner said. Maybe an eagle-eyed reader will then write in pointing out the discrepancy, but reporters who never commit anything more serious than this offence are doing pretty well.

Making sense of statistics

Statistics present the most formidable challenge for reporters. Very few newspapers in developing countries can afford the luxury of having a business editor who is either qualified or can train himself on the job to get to grips with the mountain of official statistical reports which in the last decade must have become the biggest growth industry in the world. In nine out of 10 newspaper offices, what happens is that the news editor receives some turgid looking and often very heavy report, brimming with tables of figures, drops it on a reporter's desk and says: "See if there is anything in this for us". The reporter flicks through the pages with less than interested eyes which glaze over as the officialese oozes out. The net result is often not more than the most cursory examination before the report is tossed aside. And that is the end of that!

One can have sympathy with anybody who treats official reports like this but the fact of life is that newspapers are in business to tell the public what is going on and very often a lot of important news is contained in the colums of statistics found in such reports.

So how should you tackle them?

Obviously, a little self-examination is necessary. The reporter who does not know the difference between per capita income and gross national product is going to have trouble. If you can't get a simple dictionary of economic terms, then track down somebody who knows about these things – either in the local university or your government treasury office – and take advice on the list of guidelines you will need to get you through the labrynth of economic and financial jargon.

But there is a simple – it almost sounds *too* simple – way that the reporter should tackle statistical reports, or for that matter any other type of reports, which at first glance look very unappetising. He should pick them up and say to himself: *"Now what is all this about?"* For *what it is all about* is what he is now embarking on finding out. You must spend some time trying to answer this question, in precisely the same way that you would spend some time writing the intro to a story. Try to condense the answer in your mind into a simple, straightforward answer to the question.

Have a look at the table of statistics facing this page. They are taking from a World Bank report and they are fairly typical of the sort of, at first glance, bewildering statistics served up by such organisations. Now let us look at them long and hard, first of all trying to answer that question: *"What is this all about?"*

Well, the heading gives a pretty strong clue. 'Health Related Indicators' is a rather long-winded, civil service way of saying that the figures concern health. Then if we look at the top of column one we will see that all the countries listed are described as low income countries. This is another bureaucratic way of saying they are poor countries. So really, there we have the answer to our first question. The answer is: These figures are about the health of people in poor countries.

Having answered your question you are now well on the way to making sense of the figures and, much more important, getting a story from them. In fact, as we will see, several quite good stories. Now look at the headings of the different columns. It does not take too much concentration to work out what they mean.

The first two columns, 1960 and 1977, are the number of doctors per head of population for each country in those years. Again, notice how the simple word *doctor* has been turned into the much less simple word *physician*. Whoever heard of anybody saying: "I am going to see the

Table 22. Health-related Indicators

	Population per:				Percentage of population with access to safe water	Daily per capita calorie supply[a]	
	Physician[a]		Nursing person[a]			Total	As percentage of requirement
	1960	1977	1960	1977	1975	1977	1977
Low-income countries	11,680 *w*	6,150 *w*	5,700 *w*	6,200 *w*	29 *w*	2,231 *w*	98 *w*
China and India	3,730 *w*	2,160 *w*	5,510 *w*	2,900 *w*	..	2,279 *w*	99 *w*
Other low-income	39,290 *w*	16,380 *w*	7,370 *w*	14,890 *w*	25 *w*	2,108 *w*	96 *w*
1 Kampuchea, Dem.	34,830	..	..	..	..	1,926	85
2 Lao PDR	54,140	*20,060*	..	*3,040*	..	2,082	94
3 Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	2,028	88
4 Bangladesh	..	*8,780*	..	*56,880*	53	*2,100*	*91*
5 Chad	72,190	41,940	*8,040*	*4,810*	26	1,762	74
6 Ethiopia	100,470	75,320	*14,920*	*5,400*	6	1,754	75
7 Nepal	72,870	*35,250*	..	53,540	9	2,002	91
8 Somalia	36,570	..	6,220	..	33	2,033	88
9 Mali	67,050	25,150	*4,980*	*3,230*	9	2,117	90
10 Burma	15,560	5,120	..	*6,120*	17	2,286	106
11 Afghanistan	28,140	20,550	*23,210*	25,920	6	2,695	110
12 Viet Nam	..	5,620	..	*900*	..	1,801	83
13 Burundi	*96,570*	*45,020*	*6,770*	*6,180*	..	2,254	97
14 Upper Volta	81,650	*49,810*	4,090	*4,510*	25	1,875	79
15 India	*4,850*	*3,620*	*9,630*	*6,430*	33	2,021	91
16 Malawi	35,250	*40,680*	*12,920*	*2,790*	33	2,066	90
17 Rwanda	*138,100*	38,920	11,200	10,490	35	2,264	98
18 Sri Lanka	4,490	*6,750*	*4,150*	*2,060*	20	2,126	96
19 Benin	23,030	26,880	..	*3,040*	*21*	2,249	98
20 Mozambique	20,390	33,980	*4,720*	..	..	1,906	81
21 Sierra Leone	20,420	..	*5,900*	..	..	2,150	93
22 China	*3,010*	*1,160*	*2,850*	*480*	..	2,453	104
23 Haiti	*9,230*	5,940	*10,340*	*4,230*	14	2,100	93
24 Pakistan	11,000	3,760	..	9,980	29	2,281	99
25 Tanzania	18,220	17,550	10,440	3,080	39	2,063	89
26 Zaire	*37,620*	*15,530*	*3,510*	*1,940*	16	2,271	104
27 Niger	*82,170*	42,720	*8,450*	*6,270*	27	2,139	91
28 Guinea	*48,000*	16,630	*3,260*	2,490	10	1,943	84
29 Central African Rep.	41,580	17,610	*2,760*	1,560	16	2,242	99
30 Madagascar	8,900	10,240	*3,110*	*3,470*	26	2,486	115
31 Uganda	14,060	27,600	*9,420*	4,300	35	2,110	91
32 Mauritania	40,400	15,160	*7,320*	3,430	..	1,976	86
33 Lesotho	23,510	18,640	..	4,340	17	2,245	99
34 Togo	*35,760*	17,980	*5,340*	2,000	16	2,069	90
35 Indonesia	46,780	*13,640*	..	*8,850*	12	2,272	105
36 Sudan	33,500	8,690	*3,040*	*1,280*	46	2,184	93

physician"? Reporters should constantly be trying to turn bureaucratic or less common words into simple words which will be understood at once by the *Man in the Biscuit Factory*.

So if we look down the 1960 column and the 1977 column we will see the change in the number of doctors per head of the population there are for people in poor countries. Where there are two dots it means that the country just does not know what the figures are, or maybe it is not telling. What becomes clear, looking at the 1960 and 1977 columns, is that in almost all the countries there has been a marked reduction in the number of people relying on one doctor. Uganda, No. 32 in the list, is the big exception and it does not require much imagination to explain why this should be. The war with Tanzania, when Idi Amin was in power, is obviously the answer. Like a lot of other people, many doctors fled.

The next two columns after doctors show the situation for nurses (bureaucratically described as *nursing persons*).

Several more countries do not know or do not disclose the figures for nurses.

The next column, about safe water, is fairly clear but the quick-minded reporter will see that these figures are really two-edged. For example, Ethiopia (country No. 6) is shown as having safe water for 6 per cent of its population. Until you think about it that is just another statistic. But *if* you think about it, then you say to yourself: "That means 94 out of every 100 people in Ethiopia are using unsafe water". There is a pretty fair story in that statistic alone.

The last two columns are all wrapped up in officialese. Just what is: daily calorie supply per capita? Well, it is very likely that many reporters just would not know what this means. But it should not require much effort to telephone somebody, probably a doctor or even a "nursing person" to find out. Having found out you will then have to translate this mouthful of meaningless words into something the *Man in the Biscuit Factory* can understand. What, in fact, "daily calorie supply per capita" means, is the amount of food needed to keep a person healthy. If for some reason you have been unable to find out what terms like this mean, then never take refuge in the easy way out by merely repeating the term in your story. Far better to leave all reference to confusions like this out of a story than pass on your confusion to the newspaper readers.

So, having studied the figures, the makings of quite a nice story begin to shape, particularly if your country is among those listed. Let us assume you are a reporter of an Indian newspaper who has just been given the statistics to see "if there is anything in them for us". Having answered the initial question: *"What is all this about?"* you have got your mind round the answer and understand what the figures reveal. You have telephoned the local hospital to find what the calories per capita mean, but the fast-talking doctor has still left you rather uncertain about the exact meaning. And anyway, the two figures shown under the columns dealing with calories only add to your doubts. So, you decided you won't risk it by getting embroiled with the calories, as anyway, you think you have enough to make quite a fair story from the other figures.

Now you are looking for your intro. What should it be? What is the most interesting or important fact that arises from the figures? Is it the number of doctor in India? Is it the number of nurses? Is it the changes in both of these figures between 1960 and 1977? You might feel, as an Indian journalist, that with all of India's vast problems it is remarkable how well off for doctors and nurses the country seems to be compared with many other much smaller countries. And if you look very carefully down the 1977 figures for doctors you will discover that, in fact, India is better off in the number of doctors than any other poor country. That is a pretty good intro in itself:

> **India is better off in the number of doctors per head of population than any other poor country.**

After that intro you would, of course, need to give the figures and elaborate a fair bit to justify the statement, and you might well feel that what you really need to know now is exactly how many doctors there are in India. Even though the World Bank figures do not tell you this, an intelligent reporter would make a couple of phone calls to find out. Never be merely satisfied with what plops on your desk. The good reporter will always try to reach out for more.

The Indian reporter, having written his intro, would then explain where the figures came from, but he would also look round to relate the figures to something the average reader of his newspaper could understand.

The three obvious countries that would interest Indians most would be its neighbours, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. So the story might then continue by comparing India's figures with these countries.

Later on in the story you can say:

Only a third of all Indians have access to safe water. This is not as good as in Bangladesh, where more than half the people can get to safe water, but it is a little better than in Pakistan. Sri Lanka is best, with 80 per cent having safe water.

You might feel that it is a good idea to compare these figures with some of the poorest countries outside of Asia shown in the list, in Africa, perhaps.

But clearly there is a good story of anything between about six and 10 paragraphs here which would be well worth its place in the paper.

A final word about statistics. Be wary about giving too many of them. The average reader just cannot digest more than four or five figures. After that he loses interest and turns the page. Wherever possible try to round off figures. The numbers of Indians with access to safe water is shown as 33 per cent. Much better to call this a third of all Indians. The Bangladesh figure is 53 per cent. Better to say: just over half.

Obviously there will be many occasions where you have to give specific figures, particularly when dealing with finance. But all the time try to simplify figures so that the average reader can digest them easily. All reporters in the office should adopt the same style in writing figures. It is easier for the reader to digest 10 million than 10,000,000. The important thing that all the reporters are following the same style. (see Style Book page 89).

The News Editor

The News Editor

The news editor is the linch-pin of the newsroom – or at least he should be. You cannot have a good newspaper if you do not have a good news editor, for he is the man responsible for all news organisation.

The most important ingredient of any newspaper is news. But too many news editors behave rather like managers in insurance companies, dispatching their reporters to assignments rather like insurance salesmen going to see a prospective customer. The news editor must be the fountainhead and inspiration of the newsroom. News is not merely what happens; it is also what can be made to happen. A news editor can make things happen in a perfectly legitimate way, as we shall see just now.

Most news editors come to their jobs from having been reporters. Many editors are made at the news editor's desk. How should an active news editor operate? First, he is in sole charge of the diary and he should be poring over this many times a day – and mentally turning over the pages several times a night, too! In the news diary he lists all the up-coming events for as far ahead as possible. Sometimes this will be months ahead as events like big gatherings are known. But on a day-to-day basis his primary concern is to see that the diary events for the day are covered by allocating the most suitable reporters to them. Although every reporter should be a good enough all-rounder to be able to be used for virtually any type of story, the news editor will know the special skills and qualities of each one of his reporters; he will know that this man is particularly good at court work but not much good at interviewing; from experience he will know that another man is pretty hopeless at hard news events like accidents and even meetings, but a first class interviewer.

On those many papers which do not have specialist writers he will know the right reporter to cover the budget and the right one to make sense of the government's new education programme.

Sources

Although reporters will have their own contacts the news editor will supervise and keep a list of all the paper's regular sources of news. In developing countries, much more so than in many other societies, a lot of news comes from well defined sources and it is the news editor who must ensure that these sources are cultivated by his reporters.

Here are some of the sources the news editor will control:

1. Government ministries: the party structure, or in those countries with opposition parties, the opposition. It is the news editor in consultation with the reporter generally on these beats who will know the key personalities most likely to be of use to the newspaper. Not only will these people be figures, like the president's press secretary, but they may also be the doorman at the ministry of foreign affairs. Many of the best stories in newspaper offices come from tip-offs from people with very modest positions.

2. All the organisations in the circulation area of the paper: these may range from youth movements to trade unions. Again, the name of the most useful contacts will be shown.

3. All the principal business and commercial organisations and often the main factories or companies, again with names: Always names. If suddenly there is a deadline pressing and the paper needs a quick quote from someone in a factory that has just blown-up or gone bankrupt they need a *person* to speak to.

4. All organisations like police, immigration, customs, courts. These are enormously fruitful sources of news properly cultivated. A nod and a wink from a policeman or a court clerk has produced many a first-class story. The nods and the winks are only given when the contact is well established. The news editor should see that they are there.

5. All the hospitals in the area.

6. Hotel receptionists can be very useful people in an age where some odd and interesting people are moving about the world.

It is well worthwhile the news editor having a list of specialists and experts in different fields who can be contacted for an opinion or a quote on some new development. For example, if somebody starts testing a nuclear weapon not too far away from your country the view of a local scientist on the possible effect on the area would make a good story. If the United States of America decided to stop trading with, say, South Africa, a local economist should have some views which give a local slant to an otherwise international story.

The imaginative news editor will make his own source list and never lose sight of the need to amend it. Some of these sources need checking every day of week of the year. It is the news editor who will ensure that the reporters do this.

Thinking ahead

The news editor will always be thinking ahead, not just about tomorrow morning's news, but also about stories that can be related to news he knows is going to happen. For example, the budget may be due in a week's time. Get a reporter to interview a cross-section of people, from the average worker to big business men, on what they are hoping for. The United Nations is to issue a black-list of sportsmen who have ties with South Africa. Get a reporter to interview local sportsmen on what they think about this.

Follow-ups

Follow-ups to hard news are a natural. The minister of labour has made a statement in parliament about urban unemployment. Apart from reporting his statement, send a reporter out the next day to get a human-angle story on just what it means to the unemployed in the city.

The active news editor will go through the copy of his reporters, not merely to see that the story has been properly done, but also to see whether there is something else that might be followed up arising from the story.

A reporter may bring in a story about an increase in charcoal prices being charged in the market. But the news editor wants more. Why have prices risen so suddenly? Is somebody running a racket? Get the reporter to follow this up. This actually happened in Nigeria and when the news editor told his reporter to have another bite at the story what finally emerged was a first-class report about racketeering and corruption.

A month ago an area in the country was hit by severe flooding. The story ran for a couple of days and then disappeared from the paper. But what is the position now? Send a reporter to the area to find out. Stories about people in sad circumstances make very good reading.

A picture of Miss World, just crowned in London, drops on the news editor's desk. Nothing very interesting there – and particularly as yet again Miss World is white. But hang on, isn't there the seed of a story in that fact alone? Are there two standards of beauty, one white and the other black? What does the average African or Asian think of European beauty queens? A little imagination like this and careful briefing of one of his brighter reporters and the next day's paper comes out with a picture of the white beauty queen with a headline asking: Do black men like white women?

The reporter has interviewed, probably in rather light vein, some of the average men in the street. Slightly provocative, perhaps, but *the Man in the Biscuit Factory* is going to read that story much sooner than the latest speech by the vice president urging everyone to work hard. And in the bar that evening the regulars are far more likely to be talking about that picture and story than the vice-president. Papers that get talked about also get read.

It might be stretching things a little, but the day after there could even be a story under the heading: Do black women like white men?

It is the news editor more than anyone who should be thinking up bright ideas like this, many of them serious but never losing sight of the bright, off-beat, even provocative story. The news editor with the fertile mind will be finding angles like this many times a month.

Outside the city

All over the developing world the most neglected area of news coverage are the rural areas. It is hardly surprising, bearing in mind the enormous difficulty and cost of covering them and also the fact that 90 per cent or more of newspaper circulations are in the urban areas where papers are produced. But if national development and nation-building is to mean any more than political lip-service, what is going on in the rural areas should be reported upon.

There is a tremendous opportunity for an imaginative news editor to establish a regular and efficient service of rural news. This may vary from regularly sending reporters on fairly long trips covering news which though lacking in the timeliness of having just happened is nonetheless important in the context of the country as a whole, or even establishing stringers in the rural areas and carefully briefing them on how to cover the news in their districts.

Asian newspapers have done much more of this sort of thing than African and in some cases special courses of three or four days have been set up in the newspaper and the country correspondents – people like schoolmasters, priests, or other literate, responsible individuals – have been brought to the office for a thorough going over on how to serve the paper. It costs money but it can yield enormous dividends.

Sub-editing

The traditional belief is that the sub-editors are the enemies of the reporters, hacking copy to pieces, re-writing intros that have been slaved over and generally messing up the whole story. For their part, the subs are supposed to see the reporters as no more than a lot of messengers with notebooks whose copy requires so much re-writing that the subs often feel it would have been quicker had they done the stories themselves in the first place.

Both views are rubbish. The quicker everybody in the newsroom realises that the production of a newspaper is teamwork calling for the closest co-operation and understanding between everyone, the better the newspaper will be. This is true everywhere, but it is particularly important in countries where newspapers rarely enjoy the luxury of developed countries where newspapers have scores of editorial staff and specialists who with the latest technological resources can bring all their labours together into producing a highly sophisticated end product – sometimes, that is.

In most developing nations, even on the bigger papers, editorial staffs are a fraction of the size of some of the world's biggest newspapers. *The New York Times*, for instance, has some 600 reporters alone. It is doubtful if there are this number of reporters on all the daily papers in Independent Africa put together. The libraries of most London newspapers often have a bigger staff than the entire editorial complement of newspapers in many developing countries. Incidentally, this gross overmanning is one of the reasons why the newspaper industry in many developed countries is a shrinking industry.

It is very different in the developing world. A daily newspaper with as few as two dozen reporters and eight or ten subs is often the pattern. This is both a strength and a weakness. A strength because, provided everybody is highly professional and knows exactly what his part in the operation is, a small editorial staff is easier to control and often operates with a greater team spirit than a huge operation where you may work for ten years without knowing the names of many of the people. A weakness, all too apparent in very many newspapers in many developing countries, where a small staff is unprofessional, badly led and indulging in petty jealousies with reporters and subs seeing themselves on opposing sides.

Many reporters – and good ones, too – on big papers all over the world, go through their entire careers with only the haziest idea of what is involved when their copy reaches the subs' desk. It is crucial that reporters in fairly small offices should not only understand how the subbing end of the operation works, but should be able to take his turn on the subs' desk in an emergency and still do a reasonable job. In fact, this is often the pattern on smaller papers and until trade unions got their teeth into the newspaper industry and stopped it, this was a common practice, even in developed countries.

But it is not merely that it is very useful for a reporter to be able to do a shift with the subs, to help out when staffing is difficult; much more important is the fact that the reporter who understands the rudiments of subbing is going to be a very much better reporter.

Let us have a close look at the subs' desk and what happens there. The key figure is the chief sub. In many countries at the end of the normal working day when the editor and most of the reporters have gone home in the early evening as the subs are coming on duty, the chief sub is virtually the editor of the paper. Although the editorial, or leading article, will already have been written and probably set by the time the subs come on duty, it is the chief sub who will decide what tomorrow morning's paper is going to look like; what the main story is going to be; whether a political speech is going to be given a big show on page one or cut down to a few inches and lost on page five.

For a long time after newspapers began a couple of hundred years ago, what they looked like did not seem to matter. Headlines barely existed. Pages were just grey slabs of type. No attempt was made to catch the reader's eye as he passed the news stand. This fashion went on for a long time. It is only fairly recently that *The Times* of London ceased filling its front page with small classified advertisements – and there are quite a lot of aged Englishmen still alive who have not got over the shock of actually having news on the front page!*

One of the greatest weaknesses of the press of the developing world is the lack of attention given to what the newspaper looks like. Enormous dividends are there for the taking if newspapers would just spend time and perhaps a little money in the purchase of a few new founts of type to improve their appearance. Many newspapers who have done just this have sent their circulation leaping almost overnight. One weekly paper in Southern Africa sent their editor on a course where he was able to follow advice about lay-out which when he returned home resulted in the circulation of his paper quadrupling in a month. There are many success stories of a similar nature with Indian newspapers.

It is hard to believe, but there are still newspapers around which are put together like parcels each night, with no proper planning and no dummy, in the same way that there are still a lot of houses being built without an architect or a plan. It is not impossible to produce a newspaper without a dummy, any more than it is impossible to build a house without a plan, but houses that have been built from proper plans look much more professional than those that have been put up as the builder went along. It is exactly the same with newspapers.

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*) In the chapter on headline writing, it will be stressed that exclamation marks should never be used with news headlines as an exclamation mark is virtually a comment saying "Just imagine that". This is the sense in which this exclamation mark is used. In news headlines, leave the reader to decide whether something is remarkable or not.

Newspaper design

The basic principle of newspaper design, apart from making the product an attractive, saleable proposition, is to give the paper an identity; what *kind* of newspaper is to be produced and even what *kind* of readership is being sought.

In countries where there is a wide selection of different newspapers (India is about the only such country in the developing world) the person buying the newspaper can look at the shop-counter where they are all displayed and take his pick according to the impression they make upon him. First appearances are very important.

Though this consideration barely applies in many developing countries where there may be only one or perhaps two newspapers, the basic principle is still sound.

It is important for the newspaper to have a typographical identity. First it must be immediately recognisable for what it is, so that the reader comes to look upon it almost as an old friend. But it must also be flexible enough not to become a boring old friend. Almost as much as the quality of the contents of the paper it is this familiar identity which is an enormous aid to encouraging regular newspaper readers.

A newspaper must look like a newspaper and not like a train timetable or a poster advertising a football match. A properly designed newspaper will aim to draw the reader's eye from one part of the page to another in an orderly, intelligent fashion. Readers should not expect to battle their way through a maze. The trick is to be attractive without being garish. It is the same with women. The basic rule for newspaper design should really be the same as the basic rule in all other journalism; clarity and simplicity.

The most common fault is the use of too many different headline types and text types. Almost all headline types suitable for newspapers come in various weights, very light to heavy and in various widths, from extended to condensed. Most also have italic.

The newspaper that sticks with one type face for its news but draws upon different members of its family will have more than enough headline type to produce an attractive paper that has its own immediately recognisable identity. For the feature pages two or even three different type families – different from the news faces – will be more than adequate.

There are hundreds of different type faces available and in the end it comes down to a personal choice – though, perhaps, when newspapers are being redesigned, it makes much more sense to bring a number of different opinions to the decision on what founts to go for.

The modern tendency over the past few years has been the increasing use of lower case for headlines. Tests have shown that the average reader can visually digest a headline in lower case rather easier than in caps. The serif faces like Times Roman have stood the test of time and it is difficult to see them being replaced. The reason is probably that since bulk reading matter became available, either in book form or newspapers, the text was always set with type which had a serif and thus people have grown used to this style. You will occasionally come across magazines and even the odd newspaper which uses at least some sans serif faces in the text setting but most people are never very comfortable reading such texts. Sans serif headline type is a different matter and a lot of successful papers which prefer not to stick with one family for headlines find that the occasional use in the occasional often off-beat story adds just the right flavour. Boxes and panels are often the sort of things where a sans serif headline type can be used to effect.

Again, it is always a matter of personal choice but there is a growing tendency among broadsheets to set their news headlines left. Have a look at the pages of Britain's *The Guardian* which pioneered the set-left school. It is clean and effective and complies with all the fundamentals of helping the reader to get the message at once. An illustration of just how much thought can go into the design of a newspaper is given in Harry Evans' book: *Newspaper Design*. He quotes a former Fleet Street editor, now chairman of a large publishing company as saying that when he was designing a page he always bore in mind that long columns of text were almost impossible to read on crowded buses and trains. He thus instructed his subs to use a fair bit of horizontal make up; that is, instead of running an eight inch single column story straight down one column, spread it over four two inch pieces. This idea shows you just how much thought can be applied to design.

On the whole there are too many words being used in headlines and too many straps and subsidiary headlines. Even with a particularly strong front page lead of, say, a major disaster it should be possible to get the reader on the hook by no more than three decks of type consisting of about eight or nine words. It is well worth bearing in mind, too, in developing countries that newspaper growth will come from attracting new readers, very few of whom have more than a fairly basic education and who are likely to find a whole page full of typographical tricks not only difficult on the eye but impossible to assimilate. If the reporter has to bear in mind *The Man in the Biscuit Factory* when he is writing his story than those who design newspapers should also bear in mind that people of their own standard of education and experience of written matter are very few.

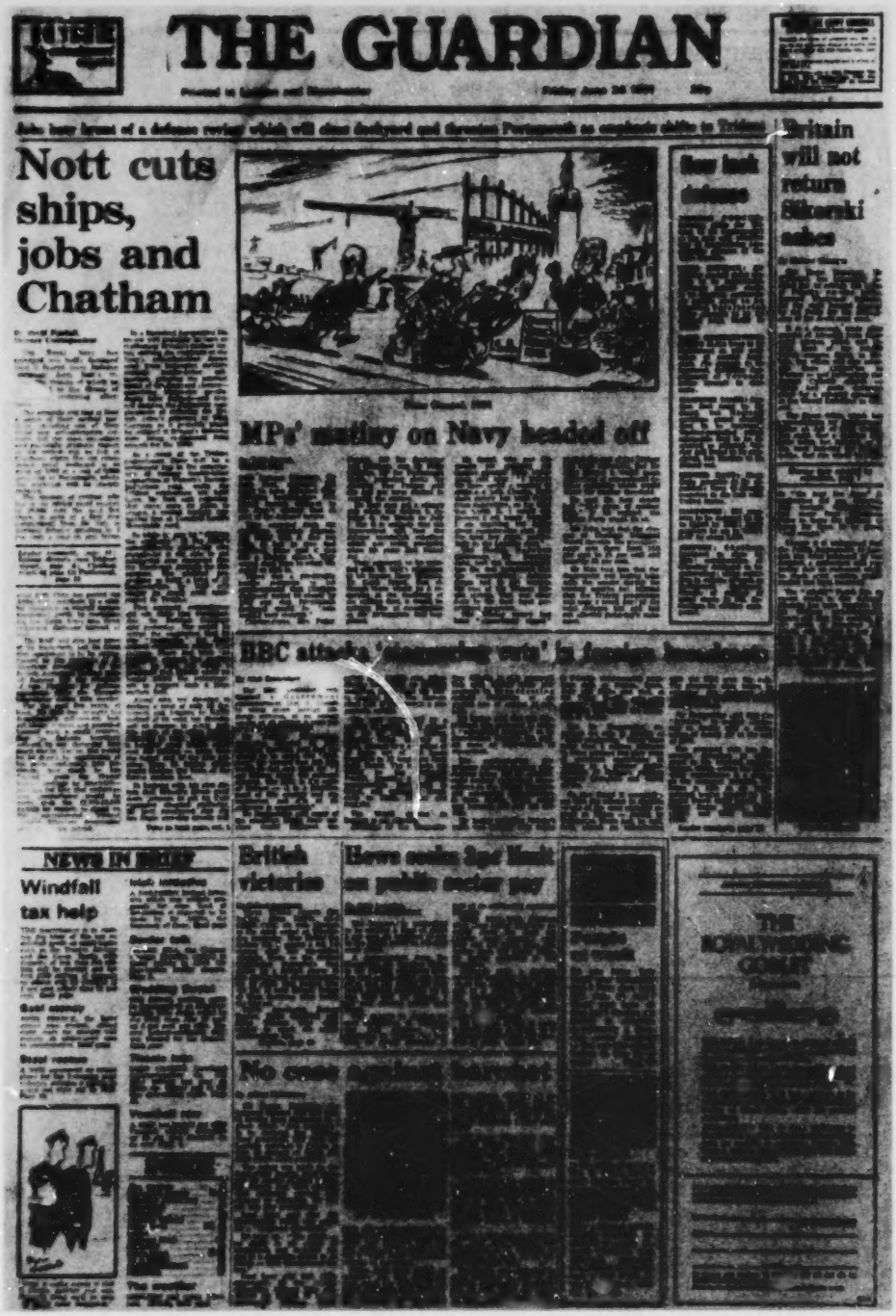
An experiment was carried out in Kenya a few years ago in which a dozen people who had just bought their newspapers from a street seller were approached separately by a research worker who then went through the pages with them, trying to assess their understanding of the way the news was presented. On this particular day there was a single column box set in the middle of a different story which ran down one long single column. Four of the 12 people questioned – all of them townsmen – believed that the story in the box had something to do with the other story.

Newspapers everywhere would benefit from a lot more basic research of this nature.

Getting it together

Some chief subs like a big dummy, others will make do with quite a small one. For a broadsheet a good working size is something like 12 or 14 inches deep by nine or 10 inches wide. Tabloids should have full-scale dummies.

The ads should have been drawn in by the ad manager before the subs ever come on duty. The ad manager need not mark exactly which ad goes where on his dummy for the subs (though he


THE GUARDIAN
Nott cuts ships, jobs and Chatham
MPs' mutiny on Navy headed off
Britain will not return Sikorski ashes
BBC attacks 'disruptive cuts' in foreign broadcasts
NEWS IN BRIEF
Windfall tax help
British victories
No cuts

One of the best looking of Britain's papers is **The Guardian.** All its news headlines are lower case and whether lead story or filler almost all the news heads are set left. A weakness on this page is the strap on the lead story – no less than 19 words. But the overall effect is clean and easy-to-get-at.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

had certainly better do so for the printers). All the subs want to know is the blank spaces on the pages which they have to fill.

The preparation of the pages for the printers by the subs should be done back-to-front, as it were, finishing with the first page last, so that any good late news can be well displayed. With a 12 page broadsheet the pattern will often be something like this:

Pages 11 and 12	Sport. This may be handled entirely by the sports department. Here again the need for reporters who can also sub becomes apparent if the sports reporters are to produce their own pages.
Page 10	Business and financial news
Page 9	Possibly a page of district news from other parts of the country.
Page 4	The editorial or leader page, which may include other features like crossword puzzles, what the stars foretell, etc. This page will also carry the main feature.
Pages 6 and 8	Feature pages, plus regular items like radio and T.V. programmes.
Pages 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7	News pages.

It makes good sense for a paper to have a regular pattern about it so that readers know what they may expect and just where to find things. As the ads increase or decrease and the paper thus enlarges or reduces the pattern can be expanded or reduced, but the same effect is retained. The key news pages should be in the early part of the paper on the odd-numbered pages, i.e. 3, 5 and 7. These are the facing pages, so-called because as the reader opens the paper these are the pages his eyes fall upon first. Then they may shift leftwards to the pages opposite, i.e. the even-numbered pages.

Many newspapers follow the pattern of having the night subs always handling the same number of pages regardless of the size of the newspaper itself. With a 12 page broadsheet this might mean that the night subs will always handle the 'hard' news pages, that is pages 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. If the sports department does its own subbing of pages 11 and 12, this would mean that the remaining pages, which are 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 would be handled by what is sometimes called the early sub, a man who comes in during the day especially to prepare any pages other than the set number of pages which the night subs will be producing.

This often means that as the number of pages increase because of weight of advertising, the day-sub may have many more pages to do. This may be tough on him, but it is much better that he should be under some pressure during the day when, if the load really gets heavy, he can be given some help, than that the night-subs, who have been used to a fairly regular number of pages to prepare, should suddenly be confronted with many more and late at night things go seriously wrong with the printing schedule.

What a newspaper looks like is very much a part of its policy, almost as important a part as what it may stand for. Although there is almost always room for considerable improvement in

what a newspaper may look like, by the time a man is appointed chief sub the pattern of presentation will have been well established. To a large extent he will know what sort of look is required. It is a pity that more chief subs do not go to their editor and say: "Wouldn't it be a good idea if we sat down with the head printer to see if there is a better way of producing the paper?"

He might even go further and maybe outline a few fullscale ideas on how the newspaper might be redesigned. It is by such initiative and imagination that newspapers are made better and thus sell more. Any chief subs in the mood for such enterprise should beg, borrow or steal the money to get hold of the best book ever produced on newspaper design: *Newspaper Design* by Harold Evans, former editor of *The Times*, London, a nitty-gritty newspaperman who has climbed the ladder right to the top by flair and imagination. He also knows a great deal about the press in the developing world. His book is one of five volumes covering every aspect of editorial work. They are all published by Heinemann, London. They may not be easy to get in many countries but any journalist, young or old, who gets his hands on this set and digests even a fraction of the information they contain cannot help but take enormous strides forward.

Just to prove that it is still possible to disagree with the best advice, Harry Evans' book quotes a former Fleet Street editor and director of the *Daily Mirror* group, Colin Valdar, as saying, apropos* of page planning: "Layout must arise out of the copy, so I read the copy first".

Obviously chief subs have to know what the stories are about before they decide where to put them in the paper, or whether to put them in the paper at all, but the facts of life are that understaffed subs' desks, where the chief sub is his own copy-taster and really carrying the whole show through the night hours to the deadline, can just not afford the luxury of sitting down and judiciously reading through all the copy in his tray before deciding what goes where. In real life in the developing world he has to flip through a pile of copy, let his experience tell him which is the obvious lead, the probable second and third leads and then set his subs to work.

A sound way for the chief sub to start work is to get his team busy on a dozen or so small stories, everything from three to four line fillers to two paragraph stories occupying up to about 2½ inches. While the subs are busy on these the chief sub can take a little more time getting to grips with the bulk of the copy that will form the night's work. It is very disconcerting for a chief sub to have to start getting his mind round the work that lies ahead while his team of half a dozen subs just sit doing nothing – or worse still talking to each other, which can be very off-putting for the chief sub.

But the main advantage of getting these fillers done early is that they can be set and held in reserve to drop in to those odd little spaces at the end of columns when page plans have not worked out exactly. It is useful for the chief sub to have a proof of these early fillers at his side as the evening progresses, to use as required.

As we have said, the paper is put together backwards, finishing with the front page. This is the newspaper's shop window. If it is not inviting then *The Man in the Biscuit Factory* will just pass by. A good front page is particularly important in developing countries where the newspaper buying habit is not as deeply ingrained as in some other countries. In a lot of countries as many as three-quarters of all newspaper circulation is sold by street sellers or in shops, as distinct from being delivered to homes.

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* Newspapermen should be wary of foreign words or phrases, but very occasionally they are the most apt way of saying something.

Daily **NATION**

No. 6412, Friday, July 17, 1981 Price 1/50

CASIO calculators
• pocket
• desk
• reader/printer
• cash register
• scientific
Vanguard

BABY TWINS SURVIVE FAMILY TRAGEDY

Six killed by poison food

PRESIDENT Moi is welcomed at Parliament Buildings by Vice-President Mwai Kibaki before the start of the Kanu Parliamentary Group meeting yesterday. Looking on are Speaker Fred Mati (centre), Kanu Secretary General Robert Matano, and Local Government Minister Stanley Oloitiptip (partly hidden).

SIX members of a Machakos family have died of food poisoning.

The victims, a man, his wife and four children, died shortly after being admitted to Makueni District Hospital.

But the couple's baby twins have survived.

The family is believed to have eaten food stored before it was properly dried. And now, Makueni DO Boniface Adewa has appealed to farmers to ensure farm produce is completely dried before being stored.

On Monday, an Assistant Minister for Health, Dr. Elon Wameyo, called on health officers to enforce food regulations in the country as a measure of guarding against food poisoning.

He particularly urged food inspectors to teach consumers how to choose from available foods and prepare it in an hygienic manner.

Dr. Wamuyo then said the Government recently had to deal with aflatoxin poisoning in Eastern Province.

INSIDE

- *Two killed for Libya coup plot — Page 2*
- *I was tortured, says Ekai — Page 3*
- *Gangsters held in bag snatch — Page 4*
- *Foreigners urged to respect Kenyans — Page 5*

University

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Prof Joseph Mungai, told the NATION yesterday:

"Aflatoxin is a poisonous substance which can be found in foodgrains like maize, sorghum, rice and groundnuts which have been harvested and stored under damp conditions which allow a particular type of mould or fungus to grow in the foodgrains.

He said proper storage of various types of grains was one of the basic requirements of preventing food poisoning and disease.

Meat, mushrooms, grains, cassava and other wild roots are said to be potentially poisonous unless they are kept in an hygienic manner.

Food poisoning is reported to be on the increase in Europe too. A report said that in 1973, the World Health Organisation reported 180,000 cases in Europe. In 1977, the figure rose to 600,000.

Said the report: "Food poisoning is now the second biggest cause of illness in Europe and the increase in recent years is worsening."

President is set to visit Rwanda

PRESIDENT Moi leaves on July 30 for a three-day State visit to Rwanda at the invitation of President Juvenal Habyarimana.

During the visit, President Moi will hold bilateral talks with the Rwanda President.

The President's itinerary in Rwanda includes visits to the National Institute of Scientific Research, the university laboratories and the Agronomic Institute.

The Kenyan Head of State will also visit sugar and tea estates in Rwanda.

The two Presidents will plant three symbolic trees.

President Moi and his delegation will depart from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport shortly after 9.00 a.m. and will reach Kigali at 10.00 a.m.

●General Kassam Njeru, a veteran of Kenya's war of independence, returned home yesterday after undergoing treatment in West Germany for wounds he received during the war.

He drove straight to State House, Nairobi, on arrival to thank President Moi and Constitutional and Home Affairs Minister Charles Njonjo who made possible his treatment at Ulma University Clinic, near Frankfurt.

When Gen. Kassam appeared before President Moi, he was no longer limping and his hearing had been restored.

General Kassam, 56, was born in Baragwi Location of Kirinyaga District. He is organising secretary of the Baragwi Kanu branch.

—KNA

See picture Back Page

MPs give pledge to President

By NATION Reporter

MPs yesterday resolved to ensure there was always a quorum in Parliament.

Their pledge to attend the House was made at a Kanu Parliamentary Group meeting in Parliament Buildings which was chaired by President Moi.

The meeting, which lasted nearly three hours, centred on the President's philosophy of love peace and unity and MPs assured the President they would set a good example for all Kenyans, said group secretary, Mark Bwaru.

Mr. Bwaru said MPs resolved to support President Moi in his efforts to run the country.

The meeting was very friendly and conducted in a family manner, said Mr Bwaru.

Mr. Bwaru said the issue of "detained MPs" was not raised.

The fate of Works Minister Paul Ngei who has been declared bankrupt, was also not discussed and Mr. Ngei was not at the meeting.

President Moi arrived at

PAGE 3 — Col. 1

5 drown in Naivasha

By NATION Reporter

THE body of a West German woman who drowned along with four fishermen in Lake Naivasha on Tuesday night has been recovered.

Mr. N. Odero, Director of the Fisheries Department, told the NATION the search for the other four continuing.

Mr. Odero said the boat, which was carrying nine passengers, capsized due to overloading.

He said some fishermen went out to set nets at about 7 p.m. and when returning ashore, they met a stranded boat which had been hired by some tourists, a woman and two men.

The boat was stranded because of bad weather.

The fishermen took the woman tourist from the boat to help her to the shore and left the two men in the boat.

While returning to the shore, their boat another overloaded boat belonging to some fishermen which they helped by taking them into their canoe-powered boat.

"The passengers were now too much for the boat and that is why it capsized," said Mr. Odero.

Mr. Odero said the West German woman, who has not been identified, was wearing a life-jacket.

Earlier, police had named those drowned as David Maina, John Nguri, Worui and Nguri.

Police said Joseph Mwangi, Mr. Boo, John Ouma and Mr. Asomesi were rescued.

Last year, 10 people drowned in the lake when their boat capsized.

And in September, nine fishermen were drowned in Lake Turkana in a similar accident.

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Industrial Management
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Marketing, Salesmanship
General Advertising
Personnel Management
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Architectural Drafting
Comprehensive Building
Comprehensive Civil Engineering
Comprehensive Chemical Engineering
Surveying Engineering
Industrial Electrician
General Electrical Engineering
Radio, TV & Electrical Appliances
Radio Electronic
Telemetry Technician
Comprehensive Mechanical Engineering
Motor Mechanics
Automobile Engineering
Draughtsman Practical
DRESSMAKING
Commercial Art Painting
Journalism (Short Stories)
Photography, Cartooning
Pig & Poultry Keeping
Tropical Agriculture
Dressmaking Pattern Cutting

ICS GUARANTEE-TUITION UNTIL SUCCESSFUL

Subject
Name
Address
Age Occupation

ICS INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGES

The Daily Nation, Kenya

Probably independent Africa's best produced newspaper. Although a tabloid it avoids the garish presentation of most tabloids and yet still achieves an attractive, strong look. Above is the standard type of front page it uses, but opposite is an example of imaginative and highly professional make-up with a really big story. Here *The Nation* has wrapped around both the front and back pages to form one striking page when the paper is opened up. Yet when it is folded it still presents a meaningful front page with the word FAREWELL as a striking headline.

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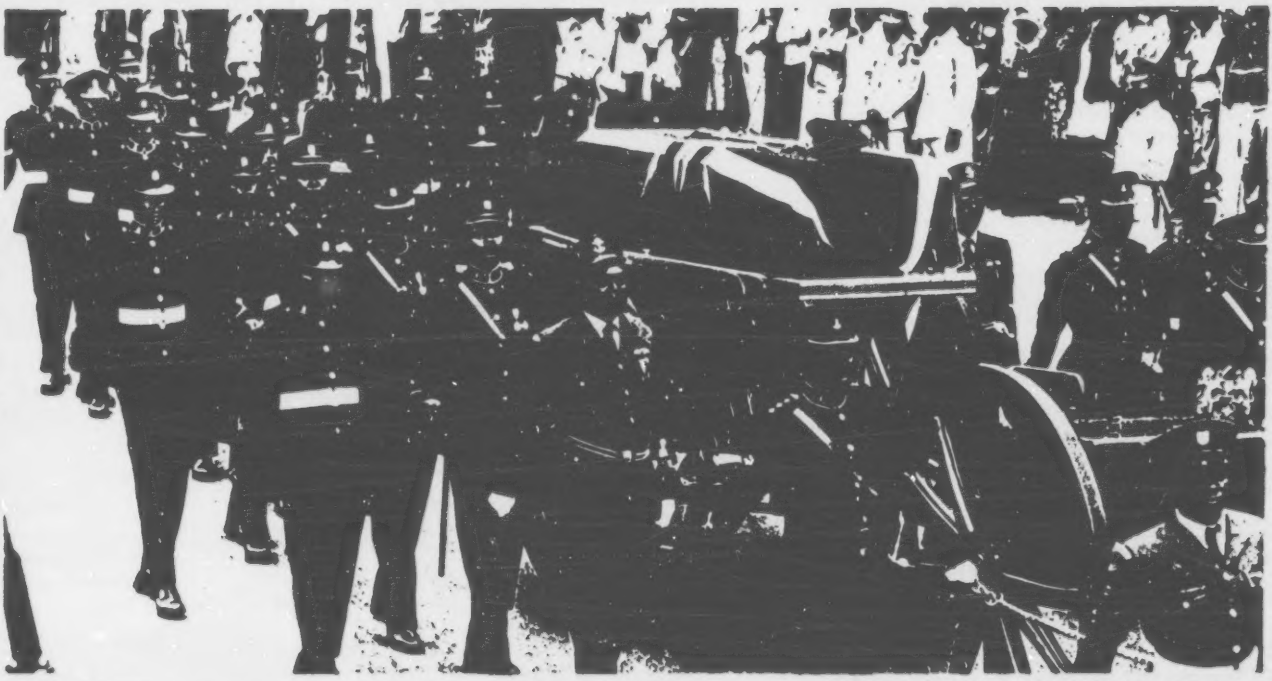
Daily NATION

Daily NATIO

No. 5863, Friday, September 1, 1978

500,000 KENYANS THRONG NAIROBI FOR MZEE KENYATTA'S STATE FUNERAL

THE FINAL FAREW



Picture by DUNCAN WILLETTS, Cameraman

THE gun carriage carrying Mzee's flag-draped coffin is drawn through the streets

Published at Nation House, Two Rivers Drive, Nairobi, and printed offset litho at Changamwe Road, Nairobi, by Nation Newspapers Limited, Box 49010, Nairobi, Tele 22201
Registered at the G. P. O. as a newspaper

ION

Kenya 1/30 Tanzania 1/40

WELL

The World salutes the grand old man of Africa

By NATION Reporter

KENYANS yesterday bid a final farewell to the Father and Founder of their Nation, in the most impressive ceremony ever seen in Black Africa.

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta's State Funeral — signalled by a 21-gun salute, attended by rank upon rank of troops in blazing red tunics, saluted by Heads of State and representatives from 88 countries — was watched by an estimated 500,000 mourners who covered parks and buildings and the empty streets all around the grave at Nairobi's Parliament Buildings.

Mzee was finally laid to rest at 12.43 p.m.

The coffin made of African oak lined inside with silver, was lowered into the marble tomb of the special mausoleum.

Magnificent

The 4,000 people in Parliament Square stood in attention. The huge crowds outside stood in silence. Then, as the coffin was lowered, the band played the anthem.

The solemn yet magnificent funeral began at exactly 11 a.m., when the cortège was drawn into the square on a two-tier gun carriage by members of the armed forces. The National Anthem was played, and the full cortège first accompanied the gun carriage in the long procession from State House, entered into position.

Mzee's family, who walked behind the carriage as pall bearers lifted the casket on to a table in front of the mausoleum. It was placed on a table covered with velvet cloth. The casket was draped in the national flag.

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta and Mama Ngina Wahu Kenyatta, widows of the late President, sat on the dais with President Daniel

TURN TO PAGE 2 – COL. 1

THE HINDU

Chenna Reddi Meets Mrs. Gandhi Again: No Decision Yet

Racial Remarks Spark Row in Commons

Defence Scientists Developing Missiles

Child-lifting Scare: Police Warning

Russia Awaiting Indian Cosmonaut

Assam Stir

Accord with Nepal on Curbing Illicit Trade

The Hindu, India

One of the few papers of international standing which uses initial capital letters for every word of every headline. The main criticism of this page is the double column box used instead of picture. It is a good secound-best if you have no picture to turn a story into a box of picture size, but here the headline type is swamped by the headings of the adjoining stories.

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China Morning Post
China oil output 'to slump'
Road scheme crisis talks
Officials seek files on Furness case
Landlords in strife over flats
You have to be tough to be a true Explorer.

Hong Kong's South China Morning Post

Here is a mixture of rules and no rules between columns. The use of the picture of the tanker is effective and the other two pictures help to break-up the big nine column page. A weakness is the strap on the lead story. A third deck on the headline would have been better. There are also rather too few stories on the page.

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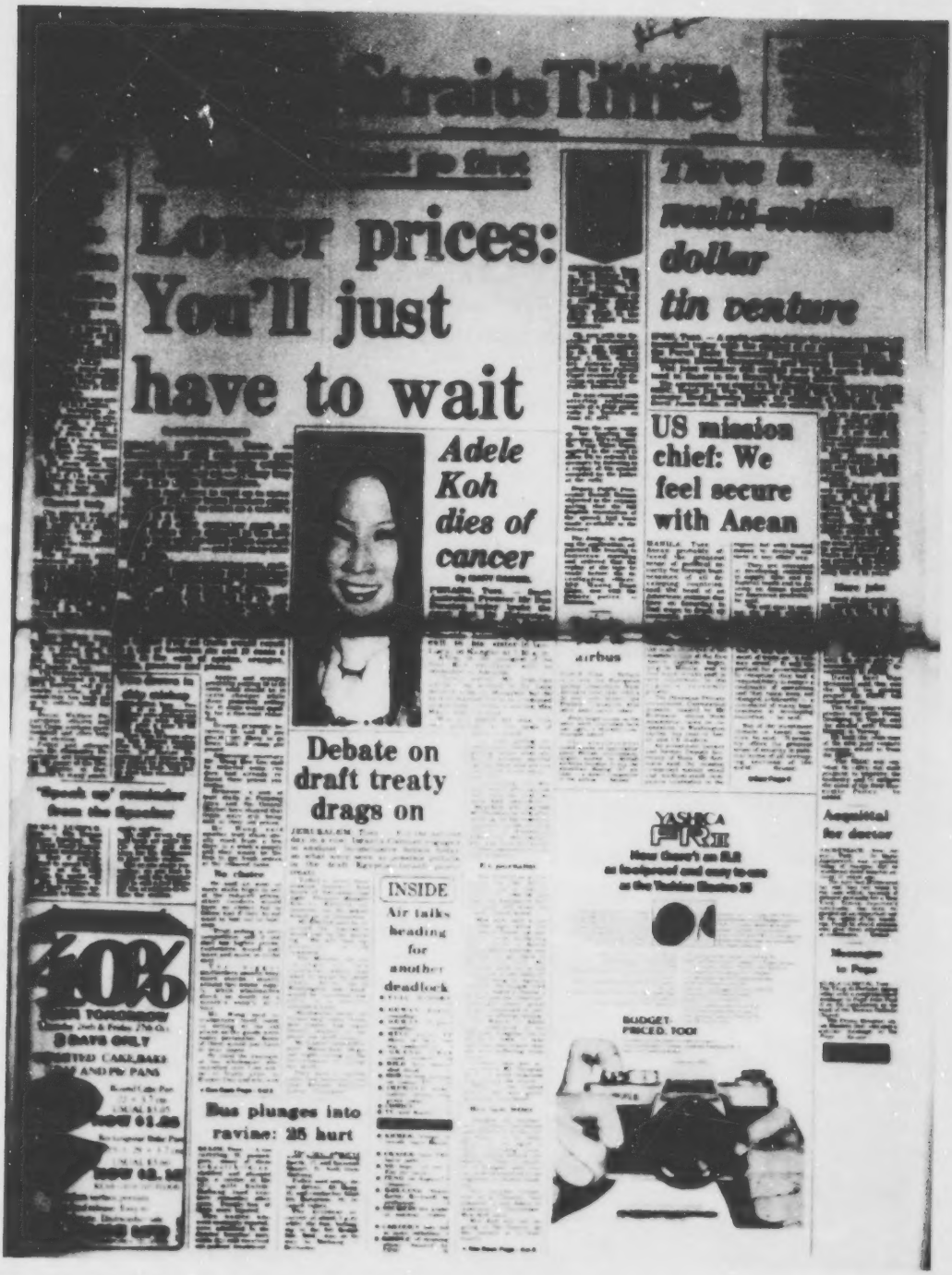
Straits Times
Lower prices: You'll just have to wait
Adele Koh dies of cancer
There is multi-million dollar tin venture
US mission chief: We feel secure with Asean
Debate on draft treaty drags on
INSIDE
Air talks heading for another deadlock
Bus plunges into ravine: 25 hurt
airbus
YASHICA FR II
BUDGET PRICED. TOO!

The New Straits Times, Malaysia

Very few papers can handle ten columns but this one does it expertly. It is particularly striking that one relatively small picture is the only illustration. Notice how much double column type there is on the lead. This would only work on a really big page.

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The Sunday News, Tanzania

Like Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* the front page rules have been removed to give more white. The main fault here is that there are not enough stories on the page but the use of column one, which is ruled, to carry a number of short stories is effective.

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PHOTOFOCUS ON THE NAIROBI CONFERENCE

UNITY IS POWER, SAYS MOI

TANZANIAN President Julius Nyerere replies on behalf of the guests at last night's banquet.

THE scene at last night's banquet in Nairobi's City Hall.

PRESIDENT Moi is congratulated by President Stevens as he takes over the OAU Chairmanship

THE O.A.U. SUMMIT

PRESIDENT Moi welcomes Sudanese leader Jaafar Numeiry on his arrival for the conference yesterday.

KING Hassan of Morocco is surrounded by tight security as he leaves the Kenyatta Conference Centre.

PRESIDENT Moi gives his opening address to the conference yesterday

The Board of Directors,
Members of Management
and staff of
Barclays Bank of Kenya Limited
extend sincere

Congratulations

to His Excellency President
Daniel arap Moi, C.G.H. M.P.,
on his assuming
the Chairmanship of the OAU
and wish him
every success

BARCLAYS

One of the main advantages of a tabloid over a broadsheet is the ability to use the two centre pages as one. Here Kenya's *Daily Nation* illustrates exactly how such a centre spread should be designed.

C1

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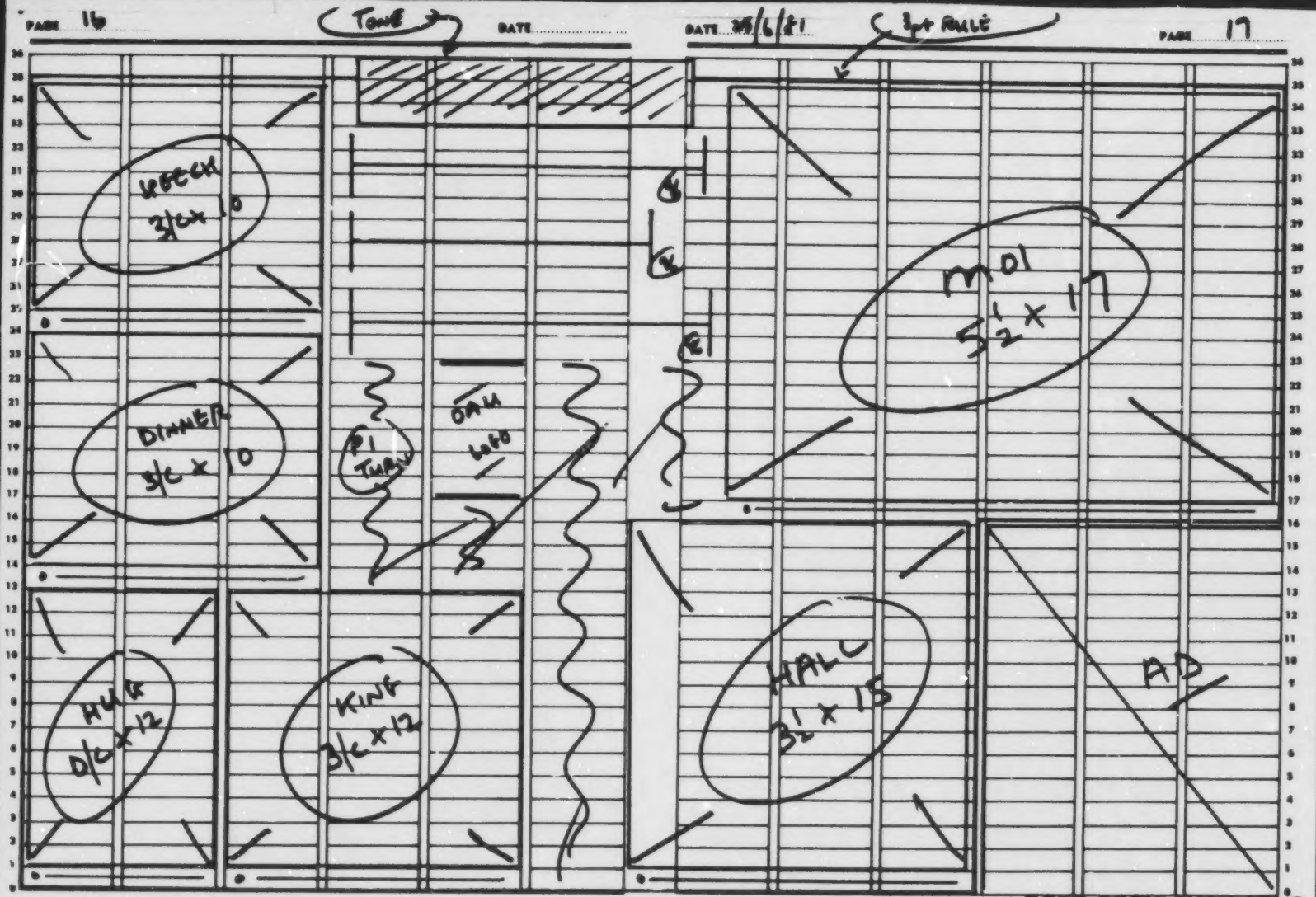

The chief sub's plan for the centre spread opposite. A model of clarity and simplicity and yet telling the printer exactly what is wanted.

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Whistlow MANSHOP
SALE
IS TODAY!
SEE PAGE 1 FOR DETAILS

The Herald

Incorporating The Nation

SALISBURY, TUESDAY, JUNE 2 1981

ESTABLISHED 1891

PRICE 10c

da Vinci
CARDIGANS
NAVY - WHITE - GREY - STONE
McCULLAGH & BOTHWELL

Hero's welcome for SWAPO chief

'VICTORY CERTAIN' —NUJOMA

THE president of SWAPO, Mr Sam Nujoma, was given a hero's welcome when he arrived in Salisbury yesterday to attend Namibia Solidarity Week.

In a massive display of support for the Namibian liberation struggle, thousands of ZANU (PF) and Patriotic Front supporters turned up at Salisbury airport to greet the bearded guerrilla leader.

Mr Nujoma arrived from Lusaka on an Air Zimbabwe Boeing 720 escorted by the Zambian air force. With him were high ranking (PLAN) officials.

The PLAN delegation was met by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Witness Mangwende, the PF leader, Mr Joshua Nkomo, and Salisbury based African and local diplomats. The French Ambassador, Mr Jacques de Bellescize was the only Western diplomat present.

The huge crowd on the airport apron broke into song and dance as Mr Nujoma, sporting a leather jacket and beret, stepped off the aircraft recognised by the United Nations as the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people.

Mr Nujoma watched several minutes of traditional dancing and singing before he was driven to a city hotel where he also addressed a press conference.

Flanked by the Minister of Information, Dr Nathan Shamuyarira, and the Minister without Portfolio and PF leader, Mr Joshua Nkomo, Mr Nujoma said the liberation of Namibia and Zimbabwe were inseparable.

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Political Editor

Mr Nujoma rejected the invitation to find constitutional or political solutions to the problem of Namibia saying a new multi-racial constitution would present all the interests of all the people in that country.

Instead, SWAPO would be the result of talks between a delegation of foreign troops from an independent Namibia and external guarantees under Article 435 of the United Nations charter.

Mr Nujoma said: "We are not prepared to negotiate with the puppets of Namibia and South Africa particularly Turnhalloists."

He said he looked to a peaceful transfer of power to the people of Namibia within a year.

"We are prepared to support any future plan for the early independence of Namibia," he said.

Mr Nujoma reached several decisions of trade union importance during a visit to a city hotel.

He said he hoped to see the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Namibian Trade Union National Congress (NTUNC) working closely together.

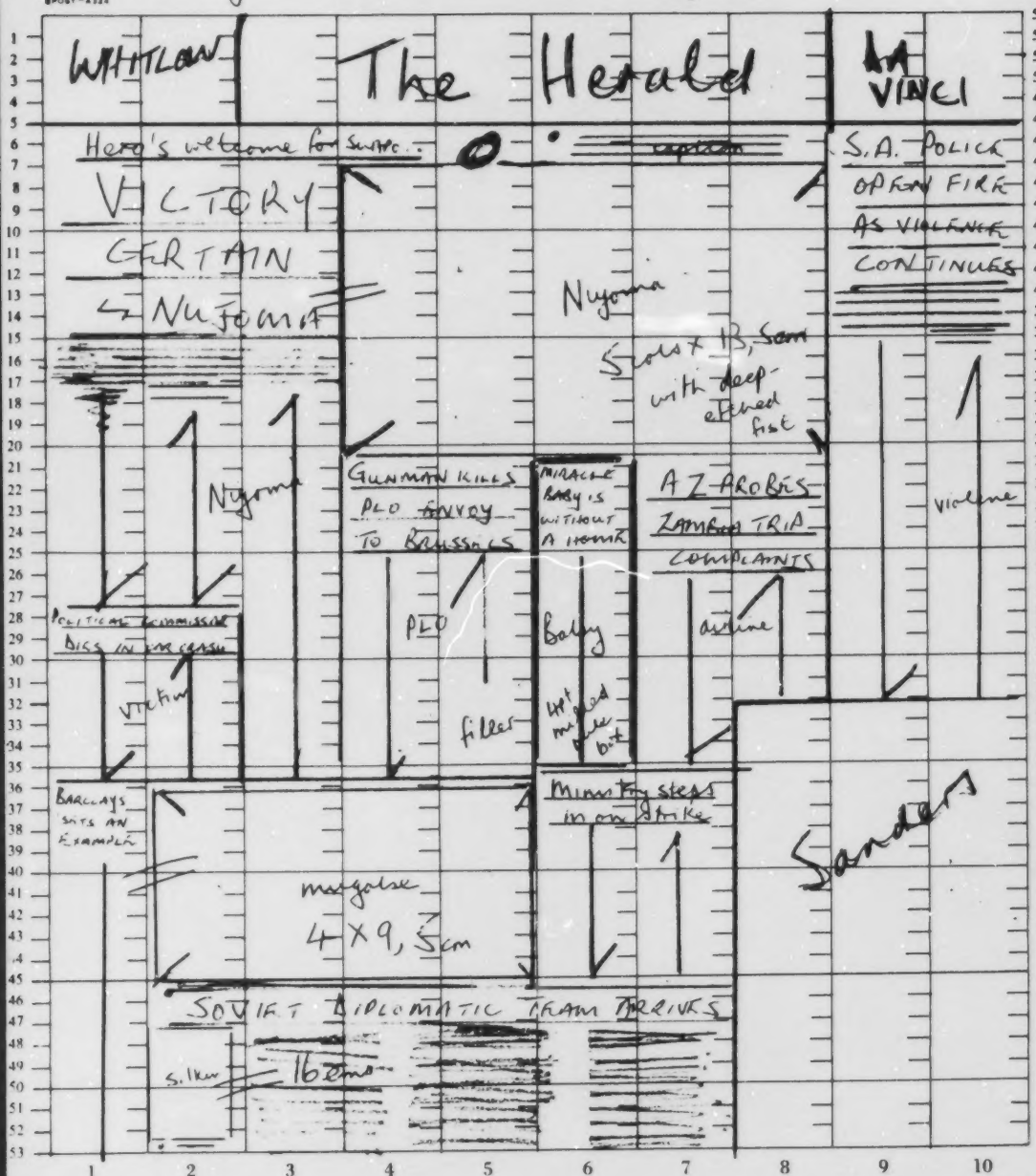
He said he hoped to see the ZCTU and the NTUNC working closely together.

He said he hoped to see the ZCTU and the NTUNC working closely together.

He said he hoped to see the ZCTU and the NTUNC

THE RHODESIA HERALD

DATE Tuesday June 2 PAGE Page 1



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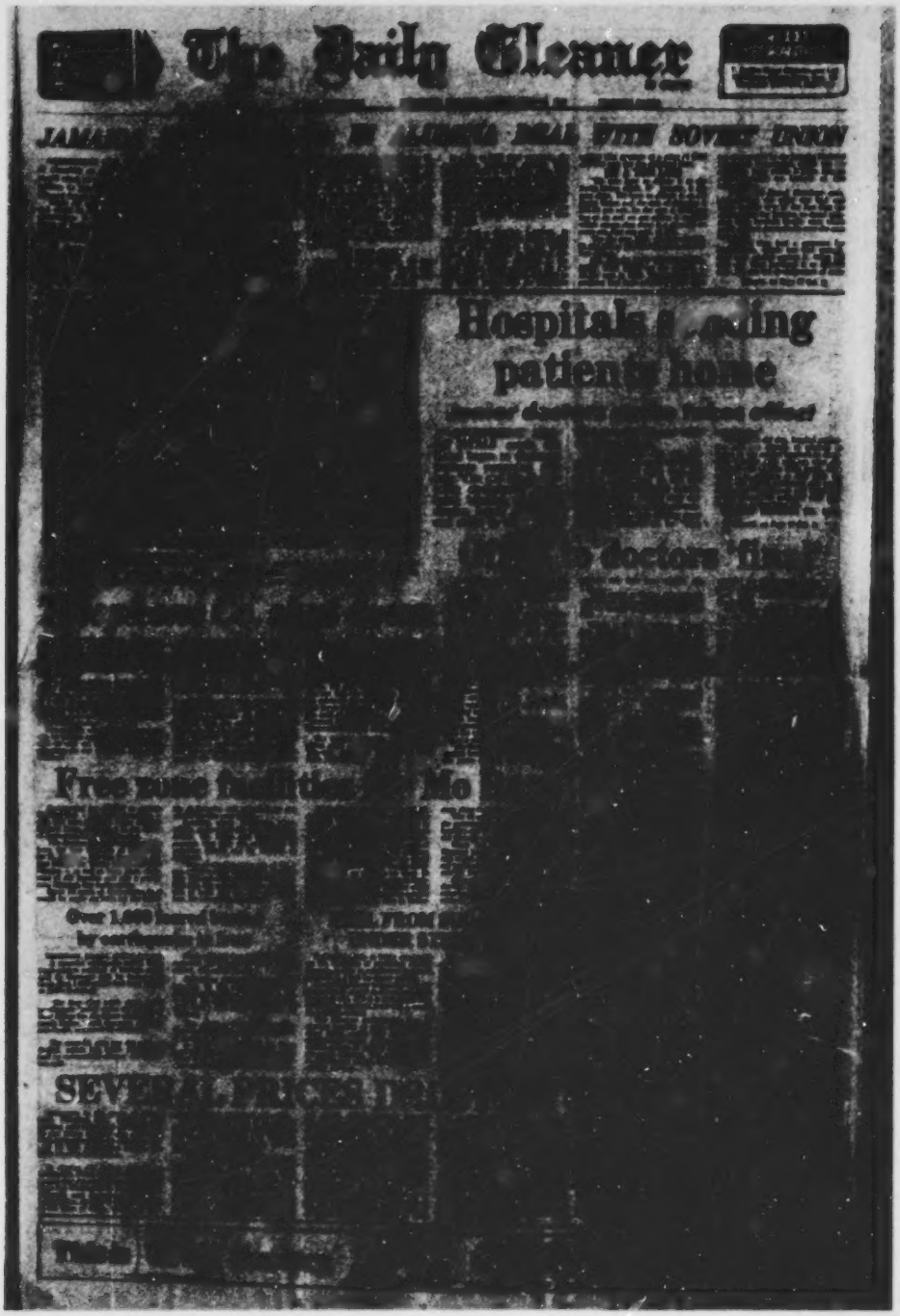

The Daily Gleaner, Jamaica

The Caribbean's biggest daily has an attractive, easy-to-get-at appearance. Removal of the column rules helps to give it an open appearance. The weakness is the sub-heading *Junior Doctors Strike Takes Effect* on the lead story. It would probably have been more effective to have had a third deck on the headline. Opposite is the chief sub's plan for *The Gleaner's* front page. All he feels it is necessary to do is write in the headlines and show the space occupied by the stories.

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10 lines 7 pt. solid, 1 inch.
7 lines 8 pt. leaded, 1 inch.
9 lines 8 pt. solid, 1 inch.
11 lines 6 pt., 1 inch.

LEADER TYPE
6 lines to an inch—leaded.

LENGTH OF COLUMNS
Page 1—20⅜ inches.
Other Pages—22⅜ inches.

Name of Comp. _____ Last Cor. _____

Page BAE .....19 Locked 12/6/87

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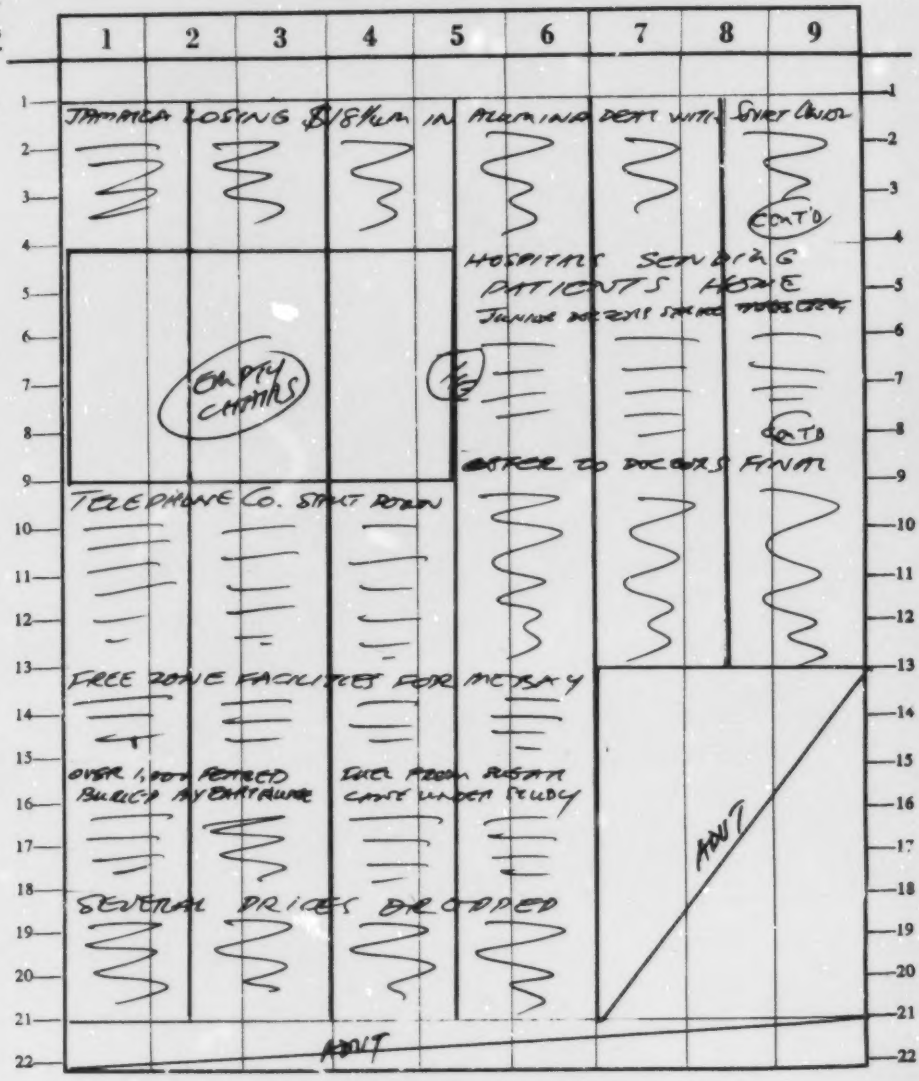

FORM 117

Copy of every story leaving the News Editor's Office must be numbered.

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THE STATESMAN
WEEKLY

PORTRAIT OF THE WEEK

Some bigger dailies put out a weekly edition. *The Statesman, India,* has a very distinctive and very effective front page to its weekly, with a big, strong picture and the formal, rather old-fashioned columns of type beneath.

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The Gleaner, Jamaica, whose daily is a broadsheet, goes for the tabloid effect with its weekly. The strap: *The Jonestown Massacre* would have been better underlined. A small point, but an important one, is the turn-over line from column two to the top of column three where the sentence ends half way along the line. It would have made a noticeable difference had this line been full out. Often it is small details like this that make all the difference in make-up.

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There is constant talk these days about the gap between the so-called developed world and the developing world but in the newspaper business there is a marvellous opportunity for the developing world to do something that newspapers in virtually every developed country are finding almost impossible to do – expand. Although most developing nations have a television service and the radio gives news bulletins, these are nothing like as comprehensive as one finds in developed countries. One of the reasons why newspaper circulations have fallen so much in developed countries is that a lot of people rely entirely upon television news. With as many as four or five up-dated and highly professional news programmes a day you really can get along without a newspaper.

But this is not so in any developing country yet, and with literacy rising rapidly there is a tremendous opportunity for newspapers to cath a new generation of readers. The front pages of their newspapers are likely to be paramount in this.

Some newspapers have a fixed layout style. This obviously makes the chief sub's job infinitely easier. He just has to follow the established pattern and keep his team of sub-editors on their toes. But more and more often once somewhat staid and fixed layouts are being replaced by a much more flamboyant style. But formal or flamboyant, the experienced chief sub will have a sort of mental filing cabinet of half a dozen different designs for front pages which he will pull out as he thinks the news of the night dictates the style.

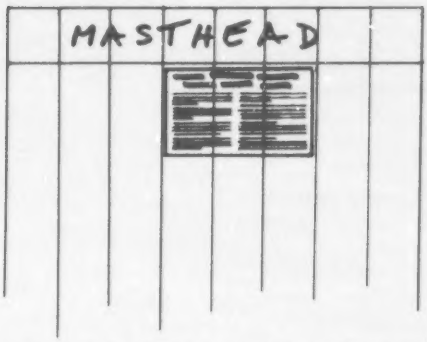
The front page

Let us go througt the steps to be taken in the design of a front page of a broadsheet. By the time the front page is due to be designed the chief sub will have put aside the obvious best stories. One of them will probably have presented itself as the obvious lead and he will have a pretty good idea of what the second and third leads are going to be, but he may also be waiting for a late story about a political meeting, which on the face of it does not sound very interesting and so he is mentally reserving some space down-page where it will probably go.

On five nights out of six – the exception being when a particularly big story is available – the first thing the chief sub must do is plan the front page picture. The front page picture is the anchor of the whole page around which the news will hang. On a normal eight column broadsheet the size will never be less than double column, and then only if it is a very deep double column, like two people fighting photographed full-length, or possibly the nation's beauty queen being crowned by the president (president's legs are never very attractive but beauty queen's legs always are and thus a full-length picture will be required).

Much more often the front page picture will be a rectangular shape across three columns, or if it is a particularly good picture, four or five columns. The chief sub will decide all this and place his picture. How he places it will determine the way he has to project the main story. Also dependent upon the size of the picture will be the display of the second lead. If the picture is three columns wide then the probability is that the second lead will be a double column story alongside the picture on the right hand side of the page. If the picture extends across the page, so that only one column remains on the right of it, then the second lead will be placed beneath the picture and the column alongside the picture will require a strong single column story – a strong top, as such stories are called.

Many – probably most – chief subs having decided on their picture and lead treatment then make the news fit the rest of the page. They just draw a good-looking pattern and then tailor the copy accordingly. The purists may disagree, but this is a perfectly good way of working.



If you don't have a picture to plan your page round then a large box, or panel, set in bold or italic is a good second-best.

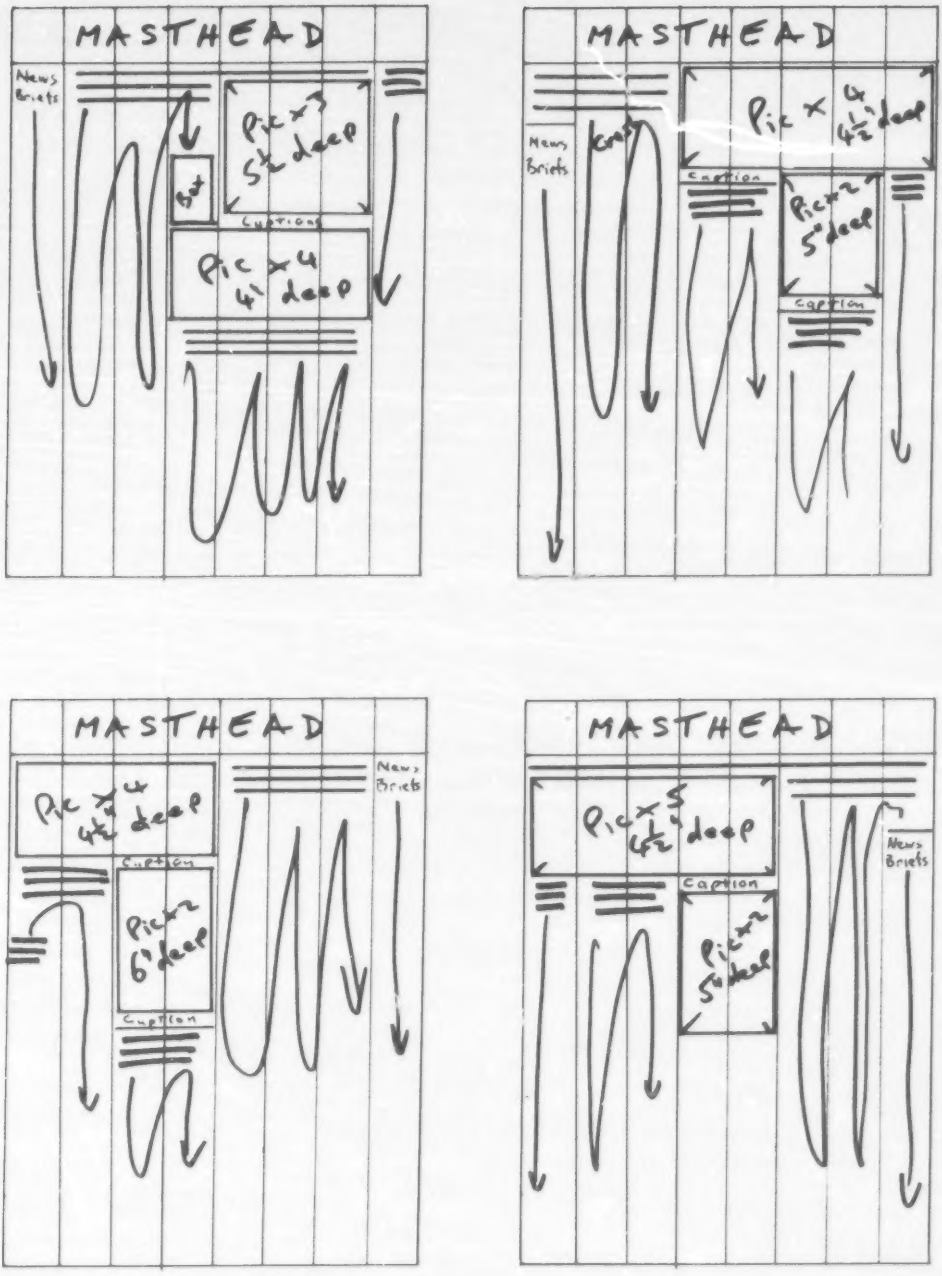
Too many front pages "fall away", with their eight columns disappearing like concrete pillars into a riverbed so. It is a simple matter to prevent this by merely putting some sort of anchor right at the bottom. A story across three or four columns, no more than about an inch and a half deep with the headline extending, of course, the full width and then going into a single column, is one good way of anchoring the page. Even an inch of type, set in black, across just two columns prevents that sinking feeling at the bootom of a page.

There are always several different ways of designing a front page. Let us take a hard news story – say 100 killed in a train crash, where you have a couple of striking pictures to go with it. The facing page illustrates four different ways this story and pictures could have been used. Some chief subs prefer the picture emphasis on the right, others go for the left. There is no "best" way. The test is what the finished page looks like

Not nearly enough newspapers put nearly enough short stories on their front pages. There seems to be a belief that because it is the front page the news on it must be important, and because it is important stories must be fairly long. This is nonsense. There are plenty of important and interesting (not always the same thing) stories which can be put in one paragraph of no more than half a dozen lines. London's *Financial Times* is about as staid and specialist a newspaper as you will find anywhere. Its whole emphasis is on business and commerce and yet it has by common consent become one of the world's great newspapers. Every edition runs 14 or 15 single paragraph stories, both British and foreign, down column one of the front page.

They may not have much else in common but the city stock-brokers and bankers of London and the *Man in the Biscuit Factory* of the developing world have the same appetite for quick, easy to get at information presented like this.

Another great newspaper, *The New York Times*, has an intensely annoying habit of turning over as many as eight different stories from the front page to the inside. Heaven knows how this ghastly habit developed. Never turn over more than one or two stories. The average newspaper reader is not a research worker who is prepared to go ploughing through the newspaper looking for the continuation of a story that started on page one. Only if the story is really first class will he want to find out how it ends. Generally he has not read down to the line that tells him it is "continued on page five" anyway. If you do have to carry over be sure that the break comes half way through a sentence, not at the end of a paragraph. Readers are much more likely to want to see how the sentence ends by turning over. Make doubly certain that when you say the story continues on a certain page that it really does continue there and not somewhere else.



Four different designs using basically the same lead story and supporting pictures.

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There are two main faults in the make-up of a lot of front pages; they are either so crammed that the effect on the reader is like throwing handfuls of type at him, or more often there is so much space between headlines and stories that the whole page looks as though it is floating.

Newspapermen, particularly those at the beginning of their careers, should get into the habit of looking at their own and other newspapers with a critical, judicious eye, considering the good and the bad make-up faults, reflecting on how the page might have been improved by moving this story to that position or by another double column in such and such a place. Do not be content to just go on day after day banging the same old drum until you really no longer hear the beat.

A final word about make-up of the inside pages, whether news or features. Always bear in mind what the make-up of the page opposite will be. If pages are designed separately, with no thought of what the page opposite looks like, then some nasty clashes can appear when the whole paper comes together.

The down-table sub

So much for the chief sub. He will have come to that position from down-table subbing so now let us look at the work of the ordinary sub. Here are some of the qualities that are needed – ideally all of them but three-quarters is a good pass-mark!

1. A well organised mind which can work under pressure. A story is often coming at a sub from several different directions. The office may take the service of two different news agencies and the sub will have to very quickly assess and integrate both to make one intelligible whole, probably a quarter of their total length.

2. A suspicious mind – suspicious in the sense that he approaches not only every story but every fact in every story with the possibility that a mistake may lurk somewhere. The sub is the last line of defence before the libel writs start coming in when serious mistakes have been made or, as happens day after day in many developing countries, angry politicians get on the phone complaining and often threatening because something in a story is incorrect. Obviously a sub cannot check everything in a story or the paper would never get printed. He has to assume that the copy produced by the reporters is accurate, but he must still be constantly alert for the possibility that it might not be.

3. A good sense of timing. Newspapers are produced to deadlines and it is no good re-writing and polishing a story that misses the deadline. Better an unpolished story badly subbed that gets into the paper than a perfect piece of prose that misses the deadline.

4. An ability to assess the length of copy, not merely what the copy will make in single column, but also how deep the intro will be when the chief sub's instructions are followed. When a chief sub asks for a story to have an intro two inches across two columns deep followed by seven inches of single column he does not want two and a half inches deep followed by inches. The ability to assess, almost at a glance, how

much type there is in the copy, is essential. It is very useful, particularly for new men on the subs' desk, to have a space-count table, not merely of the headline types but of the body types the paper uses.

Average number of words per inch with nut each side

	× 1 col	× 2 col	× 3 cols
10 pt	24	56	91
12 pt	17	40	64
14	12	29	43

8pt × 1 – average number off words to the inch

full out	nut each side	em e/s
54	45	37

A second table can deal with the various permutations of every type size. This can be particularly useful for assessing the space an intro will take.

The figures in these tables, of course, are arbitrary and depend upon the type faces used in different offices.

5. A good sub has the knack of getting to the heart of the story quickly. He can skim through as many as 20 folios of news agency or local copy and find the right intro at once.

6. An understanding of when to re-write and when not to re-write. Generally speaking there is too much re-writing by subs. The sub should remember he is there to prepare the copy for the printers according to the pattern of the chief sub. If the story before him is perfectly clear and straightforward then it needs no more than clear marking. Many a serious mistake has been made by subs re-writing stories and either excluding something important, such as a vital fact in a court case, or simply getting hold of the wrong end of the stick so that when the story appears in the paper the unfortunate reporter gets the blame from the source of the story. Many a good reporter's contact has been lost this way. Obviously there will be many occasions when a sub will have to re-write, particularly the intro. But a story that needs a lot of re-writing is probably safer on the spike. If it is important for the reporter to compose his story so that it descends paragraph by paragraph in order of importance, then it is doubly important that the sub should arrange stories which have been so written that they can be cut

from the bottom without losing their meaning. Late at night, with the deadline pressing and the last page being put together, is no time to have to start re-writing copy on the stone to fit into a certain space because the story as originally subbed is an inch or two too long. At times like this – and they happen almost every night – all that should be required is the removal of the last paragraph or two.

7. The ability to do what he is told by the chief sub. This sounds so elementary as not to need saying but it is remarkable the number of subs who just do not sub a story as ordered by the chief sub. The main fault is serving up overlong or too short copy, or else headlines bouncing. Often a headline is written in a different type from the one specified by the chief sub. It is no use a sub chewing his pencil for 20 minutes while he wracks his brain to find a headline in, say, 30 pt Times Roman to fit across three columns and then looking up and asking the chief sub: "Can I put this headline in 24 pt?" And yet this sort of thing is widespread. *Deliver the goods that are ordered.*

   Subs must understand more than just a little about type. If you do not know your ascender from your descender then you should not be a sub. A sub should develop a feeling for type in a purely design sense. He should cultivate the habit of looking at his headline when he has written it and asking himself "Does it *look* right?" – not merely does it make sense, but does it *look* right. There is a difference.

8. A sub should not assume, even in this age of initials, that every reader will know what, for example, OAU means. Even if the reporter hasn't, the sub should see that everything is spelt out the first time. Thereafter initials can be used.

   And that is about it, except for a cautionary word that should be carved inside the heart of every sub: *Never Take a Chance.* When you hand back the copy to the chief sub after you have finished with it, be certain that you are satisfied that the story is clear and accurate and that it is subbed precisely to instructions.

Understanding type

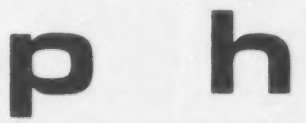
No sub is going to get very far in his career unless he has both a feel for type and more than a basic knowledge of typography. Indeed, it is more than just subs who should know something about type; reporters are better at their jobs if when they have written their copy they can see in their mind's eye how it might look set in different ways. And, of course, on very many smaller papers (and even some remarkably big ones) the reporters write their own headlines.

The newspaperman who takes the times and trouble to learn more than the basics of typography is giving himself a very high card to play in the promotion game. Regrettably, it is extremely difficult to get hold of any books on typography in many developing countries and harder still to find one written from a newspaperman's point of view. In the English-speaking world the classic is *Newspaper Design* by Allen Hutt, published by Oxford University Press.

While the aim of any sub should be to learn more than just the basics of typography, it has to be said that there are far too many subs around who don't even know the basics. Heaven knows these are simple enough.

First measuring type. It is measured in points, a point being 0.01383 inch which means there are approximately 72 points to the inch. Thus, it would seem to follow that a 72 point letter is one inch deep. In fact it is slightly less than this, for the measurement refers not to the size of the type as it will appear when it is printed, but the depth of the body of the metal on which the letter stands. But it is sufficient for subs to work on the basis of 72 points to the inch and thus up and down according to other type sizes; e.g. 36 point equals half an inch, 18 point equals quarter of an inch and if you want to go that big, 144 points equals two inches.

Now it gets a little complicated, for the points size approximates to the lower case alphabet, from the top of the highest ascender to the bottom of the lowest descender. The middle part of the type of ascender and descender is known as the X height, which simply means that it is as big as the lower case letter x, or for that matter of any other lower case letter which does not have an ascender or a descender.



descender **ascender**

Don't let all this confuse you. For practical purposes remember there are 72 points to an inch and you can reckon type sizes to this scale. It is a bit like driving a car. You can still be a good driver even if you do not fully understand the principles of the internal combustion engine.

Much more important than the higher technicalities is an appreciation of how different type faces can do different jobs on the page. This only comes with experience – a lot of it. But lesson number one is to understand the two main families of type. There are literally hundreds of different type faces and more are being thought up every day. But for the newspaperman, the grandfather and grandmother of all of them are serif and sans serif.

These are the bits called serif

Without those bits type is sans serif

Serif is a French word and so ... sans. Sans means without: thus, with serif and without serif. You can do all sorts of things with lettering but at heart they all come back to either serif or sans serif. Look at any newspaper and you will see how they dominate both the headlines and the

text. Like this book and most books, almost all newspapers set their body text (that is, the story without the headline) in a type with a serif. It is a well ingrained habit and for some reason that nobody can quite explain, it just seems better that way.

As with headline type, there are many different styles of serif text type and the ordinary person would not only not know the difference between them but would probably not even be able to distinguish a lot of them from each other. This book is set in geramond.

You may by now be feeling that while all this may be well and good, you are stuck with the type – body and headline – that your newspaper has used for many years and is unlikely to change for a good many more. So let us now look at how different settings of body type can enliven the story and improve the page. Remember, a page consists of three different colours: the black of the headline type, the grey of the text type and the white of the paper on which they both appear. The trick is to use as little grey as possible, for grey is a depressing colour and there are few things more depressing than a great slab of text type unbroken by sufficient black or white.

Fight off the grey by frequent paragraphing (which, anyway, makes it easier to read), the use of bold and italic body type, indentions to give special emphasis, occasional black blobs on an indention and leading.

All these tricks need handling carefully until you are quite sure what the effect will be. Properly mastered they can make a tremendous difference to a page. You can occasionally use a sans serif bold text type for the intro of a story, which will then continue in the traditional 'grey' serif. This style is particularly good for a double column and even for strong single column tops. Boxes – rather going out of favour these days, but still often worth their places as an aid to combating grey – are another way of using a bold face. But more generally for boxes use the bold face of the standard serif you are using for news stories.

Italic can be used in the variations suggested for bold faces, and when you have mastered the handling of body type you can mix bold and italic and serif. Nearly always you should only do this with a major story with at least a double column intro, and probably even bigger than this.

For example, for a front page lead you could use a 12 point italic for the first par across three columns, then a double column of sans serif bold, followed by another double column of normal serif face, but one size larger than the serif face to be used for the single column part of the story.

The idea is to lead the eye at first dramatically and then more gradually into the body of the story in the single column. Any sub who can get the readers past the intro of a story has done his job well.

The measure to which type is set is not expressed in points but in pica ems, more generally referred to as 'ems'. Almost all newspapers have column widths of 10, 11 or 12 ems. A sub will often mark a particularly striking paragraph in a story "em each side". This means he wants that para indented right and left by one em. A nut is half an em, also called an en. There is a considerable difference between a long story employing a few of these typographical tricks than just a slab of concrete grey running down the page.

But like riding a bicycle the first couple of times, when you start experimenting with type take it very, very carefully!

The first thing a new sub, or a sub joining a different paper, should do is to learn the types that paper uses so well that he can instantly recognise the different faces. Don't display your ignorance by asking the sub next to you, or worse still the chief sub, "What's the name of that type on the page three lead?"

Headlines

Headline writing today is much simpler than it used to be. Time was when it was common for even single column stories to have as many as six headlines, set in tiers like a wedding cake. The style today in most countries is: One story, one headline. About the only time a story will need more than a straight-forward headline – on the news pages that is, features are different – is when it is the lead. Often a subsidiary heading helps the presentation of the lead, and in recent years the strap running along the top has become fashionable.

It is amazing that subs who have been on the desk for years are still capable of writing 'bouncers' – the term of abuse for headlines that are too long, sometimes prompting angry printers to say: "This bloody type isn't made of rubber, you know". There is no excuse for bouncers, and no need for them, either. Make sure you know just how big each headline type your paper is using. By and large, *but not exactly*, lower case letter count thus: one unit for 20 of the 26 letters of the alphabet; two units for the two fat letters, m and w, and half a unit for the thin letters, i, l, f and t. Punctuation marks are half units. Capital letters follow a slightly different count, with m and w counting as two units.

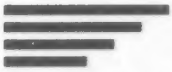
But the safest way is to make your own count table for each of the headline types your paper uses. Many a deadline has been missed because a last-minute bouncer has had to be sent back to the subs by the printers. And more than a few jobs have been lost, too, for writing too many bouncers!

Once upon a time all headlines were centred, like a cherry on top of a cake (once upon a time, too, headlines ended with a full stop). You still won't go far wrong if you centre your headlines, but it can break the monotony if you move some around a little, setting some left and even, in rare cases, right. Forget the rules: forget what the purists say: try it (preferably on an experimental proof) and see how it looks. That is what page planning is all about: *how it looks.*

Look at these single column headline patterns and commonsense will dictate which are best:

the pyramid -- to be avoided

the more acceptable inverted pyramid



a set-left head, but falling away with too much white

set-left, and far better

a centred head, but unbalanced

centred, and much better

If every reader of a newspaper had a doctorate in English then subs would not have to play tricks to capture the reader's eye and then retain it for as long as possible. Fortunately real life is different.

Cross-heads have no other purpose than to break up a slab of single column grey. Nobody reads cross-heads for they are almost always meaningless one-worders. If you have to write a cross-head, remember that as its sole purpose is to fight the grey then choose a word, or in extreme cases two words, that still leave a fair amount of white space either side. It is not just the black of the cross-head's ink that will fight the grey, but the white space, too. In the right place a two-deck cross-head looks well. Another trick is to underscore them.

But you can juggle headlines and cross-heads and straplines until you have spots in front of your eyes; if the words you put them to don't make the reader want to read the story then you may as well pack up and go home. Remember that the primary function of a headline is simply this: IT MUST MAKE THE READER WANT TO READ THE STORY BENEATH. Headlines are like the menu in a restaurant, the appetisers. They should never mislead, never exaggerate or else the reader will feel let down – and if you do that too many times he may stop buying the paper in exactly the same way as a restaurant which serves dishes less attractive than those described on the menu will lose customers.

First-class headline writing is a tremendous skill. Any newspaper that can claim to have one real top-liner is lucky. Far too many subs' desks have label writers. PRESIDENT VISITS HOSPITAL is not a headline. COUNCIL DISAGREES is not a headline. MAYOR ELECTED is not a headline. They are labels.

These labels may give the reader a general idea of what the story is about, but they do not stimulate interest; they do not stir any emotion.

Nine times out of ten – perhaps even ten times out of ten – the headliness will be written from the intro, and here we get back to the basics of reporting and the need for reporters to understand the job of the subs. For if an intro of 20 or so words is to a very large extent a condensation of everything else that follows, even though the story may take 500 words, then the headine of five or six words continues this principle and is a condensation of the intro. Thus, a properly written intro is an enormous help to the sub when he starts trying to write the headline. If the intro is so lifeless or misses the essential point of the story, then the sub will have to reconstruct the story to bring up a new intro before he considers the headline. This is time-consuming.

Wherever you can, use an active verb in a headline. It gives punch. PRESIDENT URGES MP TO QUIT is a better headline than RESIGN CALL TO MP BY PRESIDENT. Likewise MYSTERY MAN SHOT IN WOOD is better than MYSTERY OF SHOT MAN IN WOOD.

Be wary of overloading headlines with punctuation marks. They confuse the eye.

South Africa says No again	**is better than**	**South Africa's "No" to O.A.U. call**

Whenever possible write a headline that does not need any punctuation. The simple phrase that trips off the tongue is the best sort of headline. There will be many exceptions to this and quote marks are often vital, particularly in court stories; question marks should be avoided like the plague. Newspapers are for telling people what is happening, not asking them.

As with stories themselves, wherever possible headlines should deal with people, not things. Obviously, the personality must be well enough known to be immediately recognisable in print, but KAUNDA HITS BACK AT CRITICS is better than ZAMBIAN LEADER HITS BACK.

Never try to get too much into a headline – which goes for reporters writing intros, too.

Avoid abbreviations unless every man in every biscuit factory in the land will immediately know what they stand for. Because you are in the communication business you don't have to think twice when you see a headline saying BBC CUTTING FOREIGN SERVICES. But does the average reader in countries thousands of miles from Britain know what BBC stands for?

Commas cannot do the work of words. Too many subs cheat by using a comma to replace the word 'and' in a headline.

A common fault in headlines is trying to cram too much information into them, like this:

Disaster area
delegates will
see PM on more
aid, better
defence

Headlines like this are difficult to swallow in one bite. Readers should only be expected to take one bite at a headline. It is very like the rule for writing intros: keep things straight-forward and simple. The sub who wrote that headline cheated by putting a comma after 'aid' instead of using what he meant – the word 'and'. Chief subs should ban this sort of thing.

Avoid anonymous words like 'they', 'he', 'she', 'them' in headings. They just raise question marks in the readers' minds. There are plenty of ways to get round these anonymous terms. COW SAVES HIS LIFE can be changed to FARMER SAVED BY COW.

That last heading, Farmer Saved by Cow, is a good example of the exception to the rule that headlines should as far as possible not be written in the past tense. The active present tense is *nearly always* preferable. But in this case it is worth breaking the guidline to get in 'farmer' rather than 'his'.

Never use a verb without its subject, like DEMANDS ACTION ON CORRUPTION. This raises a question in the readers' minds. *Who* is demanding action?

All over the world headline jargon has spread like wildfire; words like hit, ban, slash, rapped, crash. And there are plenty more. Just because they are almost always short words and thus easier to fit they are nonetheless the lazy way out.

Tag-lines are another lazy way out:

TIME FOR
ACTION
– M.P.

You see this sort of thing a lot in court cases:

BAR GIRL STRANGLED CUSTOMER
– court told

If you can't find a better way round it, then do something like this:

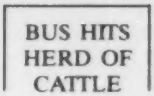
BAR GIRL STRANGLED
MAN, COURT TOLD

That breaks the rule about commas in headlines, but it is an improvement on the tag-line.

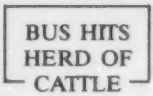
It is too easy a way out to put a whole headline in quotes, rather than struggle to include the speaker's name. Better to single out a word or two in quotes and rephrase the head.

Be wary of too much space between the lines of a head. These come about because of bad page planning. If the chief sub has asked for a 9 inch single column and the sub only produces 8 inches then the printer will have to lead out the rest of the column to fill the missing inch. This sort of thing is a sign of a poor paper.

Not many papers in developing countries have the resources or the time for the sort of sophisticated reverse blocks and clever screening in other countries. But there are a few simple make-up tricks that help to liven a page. Hoods and open-ended boxes are two of them:



hood



open-ended box

Top marks

Subs are not proof readers – even if on many smaller papers they are expected to be! But subs should know the basic proof marking they will need when subbing copy. Ideally, the only marks in the copy itself should be those indicating *the place* to which the correction refers. The corrections themselves should be written in the margin of the copy. This, of course, is the main reason why reporters should leave a wide left hand margin on the copy paper.

Here are the proof marks subs need to know:

1) To delete a word, a line or a whole sentence strike it out clearly and in the margin put the delete mark or

2) If you sub something out and then change your mind and decide it really should be in, then put a line of dots under all the deleted words and in the margin write *stet.*

3) To close up words – that is, to join two words together which you think look better as one put

4) To insert some new words into the story place the mark ⟋ in the text and write the new matter in the margin

5) When you want words to be set in italic draw a line beneath them and write *ital* in the margin. If you want bold type then draw a wobbly line beneath them and write *bold* in the margin

6) To change words to caps, three lines should be drawn beneath them. Sometimes you may not have enough space to do this (particularly if you are revising a printer's proof) and one line is generally accepted as sufficient, or ring the word and write *caps* in the margin.

7) To insert space, put the insertion mark (see note 4) in the text and the space mark # in the margin. If you want less space then again put the insert mark in the text and the mark less # in the margin.

8) Occasionally you may want to underline some words, possibly the intro to a story. Draw a line beneath the words you want underlined and write *underline* in the margin.

9) Words to be transposed should be linked by the mark ⌐¬ and the letters *trs* written in the margin

10) A new paragraph is shown by the mark [Some offices also like the letter *n.p.* written in the margin.

11) When you want to join two paras together link them with) and write *run on* in the margin.

12) Finally – and very importantly – always ring the full stops. Otherwise one day a printer with a squint may think it's only a crumb from your late-night sandwich embedded in the copy paper!

Style book

It is remarkable how few newspapers have a style book. Thus it is unremarkable the different styles which members of the editorial, both reporters and sub-editors, often adopt. A paper must have its own character and apart from its political leaning this is best displayed with consistent style both in reporting and sub-editing.

Some of the biggest papers in the world have very substantial style books, but this is really not necessary. What is necessary is a few pages making it perfectly clear to every member of the editorial team what practices should be followed in the writing and presentation of stories. It is up to the editor, in consultation with his news editor and chief sub-editor, to get together and compile a list of rules they feel the paper should follow. It is irritating for readers to see somebody's title, like a town clerk, in lower case one day and upper case the next because two different reporters have written the stories. The best way to write dates in January 4, May 16, November 1, not the date and then the month and not with 'th' or 'st' after figures like 12th or 1st. There are a whole mass of seemingly small details like this which separately may not seem very important, but the paper that pulls them together into order is a much more professional looking product.

Caption writing

In some developed countries there are actually people who do nothing else than write captions. Thank heaven for being in an underdeveloped one! The good caption writer is a rare animal. It is interesting to consider why. It may be that everything else subs do is concerned with somebody else's work – cutting it, improving it, even rewriting it. But when a sub writes a caption he is creating something entirely original: he can let his skill and imagination take over in a way that no reporter ever can – unless he is writing a feature.

Eight out of ten captions merely describe what the picture is: *Prime Minister Indira Gandhi arriving at Calcutta Airport yesterday.* Pretty dull, but not as bad as some captions which insult both the subject of the picture and the intelligence of the reader. Like this: *Mr Robert Mugabe (left) greeted by Mrs Gandhi in Delhi when he arrived for talks.* Mr Mugabe does not normally wear a sari and when two prime ministers get together they don't usually sing to each other.

A lot of the fault in captions is that the cameraman has not provided sufficient information. He has been marked down in the editorial diary: *Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe P.M. arrives Delhi Airport,* and all he thinks he is expected to do is to go there and bang off enough shots to be sure that one will be good enough to use. It is surprising the number of big papers which do not use caption sheets to be filled up by the cameraman.

	CAPTION SHEET
Cameraman	Cushow & Wenborn
Picture taken at	Delhi Airport
Picture taken on	Tuesday May 23 1981
What Picture Shows	Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, arriving for three days official visit to India. Mugabe will go on to Peking on Wed. This is his first trip to Asia.
Reporter on story	Prem Singh

Captions are normally written in short, pithy sentences of no more than about a dozen or 15 words. But there is often scope for the story-caption which can run to 200 words or so. When the Greek King had to flee his country, an otherwise routine picture of him at Rome Airport came to life with this story-caption:

> Exile is a glamour word. It has undertones of tragedy. But at Ciampino Airport in Rome yesterday there wasn't a vestige of glamour, and tragedy had yet to set in. A man running away, however compelling his reason, is undignified. A king running away is embarrassing. Embarrassing to the country to which he flees. Embarrassing to the handful of officials who have been hurriedly awakened and sent to the airport and who have not even had time to bathe and probably still have their pyjamas on under their uniforms. What do you say? "Welcome, your majesty". Perhaps you do, but as soon as the words are uttered you realise how inappropriate they sound, and you busy yourself with looking after the luggage coming off the aircraft; the seven suitcases, the white puppy and the portable radio. What incredible clutter people pack when they leave in a hurry.

It would have been much easier for the sub to have merely written: *King Constantine of Greece arriving at Rome Airport yesterday after being deposed as head of state.*

The caption-story captured the mood and pathos of the scene, brought it alive to the *Man in the Biscuit Factory*. Made him think about kings and what can happen to them.

When you have written the caption you should ask yourself whether you have exploited the full value of the picture and what may lie behind the picture. Readers always look at the picture before they read the caption. A good caption will make them take a second look.

Captions should be indented, an em or a nut each side and the type should be different from the normal body type used for stories. Italic or bold are the best.

While the caption explains and supplements what the picture shows, the overline or title has another job. It is really the catch-line and often just a label – something not permitted in headlines for stories.

Picture titles are best enclosed in a ruled line, but avoid fancy thick and thin lines. Normally nothing smaller than 18 point should be used for titles and always in a face different from headline type anywhere near the picture. Avoid thin, spindly sans types. They are not strong enough to carry the picture. Title pieces can vary in width from the full width of the picture to just a single column. Some chief subs like a rule right round their pictures but remember that if for some reason late at night you have to cut the block the effect can be messy.

Feature writing

As we have seen, there are well tried ground rules for news reporting. If six different reporters from six different newspapers went to cover a fire or a speech then almost certainly their intros and much of the rest of the stories would follow very similar patterns. But when we come to feature writing you can throw the rule book out of the window. Six equally skilled feature writers might tackle the same topic and yet they could easily come up with six entirely different features.

Very few newspapers in developing countries can afford the luxury indulged in by big newspapers elsewhere, which will have feature writers who may have never reported a hard news story in their lives. Equally, these papers have first-class reporters who would hardly know where to start if they had to write a feature. The two techniques are as different as riding a bicycle and driving a car. It is both a weakness and a strength for newspapers to use their news reporters as feature writers: a weakness because of the two totally different approaches that are needed, but a strength because it means that a well run newspaper office with a staff versatile enough to be able to switch roles can be much more competitive than other papers.

While there can be no set rules for feature writing it is self-evident that features should only be written by well experienced people who know their way round both the English language and the subject they are tackling.

Any young journalist who wants to develop his feature writing would be well advised to read as many features as possible in as many foreign magazines and newspapers as he can lay his hands on. The reading rooms of some of the foreign embassies are a good place to start looking.

If there are no rules for feature writing, then there are also no limits to what subjects can make a feature. Regrettably, not nearly enough imagination is shown in the feature pages of newspapers. It used to be said that a good feature writer could be parachuted on to the North Pole and even in that bleak wasteland produce a good feature. They do not say that any more because one enterprising newspaper (in Britain) did just that. They parachuted their top feature man on to the North Pole and though he was not there for long be produced 1,000 words which were rippling with imagination and sheer readability.

It really should be possible for a fertile mind to walk down the high street (or even the back street) of any town and come back with a couple of good ideas for features.

The best source of ideas is your own newspaper – and any other newspapers published in your area. There may be a news story of no more than a paragraph or two saying that the city's tallest building will reach its highest point shortly. Fine, how does the skyline look from there? Is the

city being developed properly? Or is the building boom leading to eyesores of the future? An easy 600-word feature here.

Once you have tuned into this sort of approach there is a mine of ideas waiting to be tapped. Whatever your subject, try to find the people who know most about it. Find out what has been published on the subject before. With features, much more than with hard news, always gather much more material than you will need. Then when you come to write it up you will find it much easier to select and discard.

Many subjects require quite a lot of research. Let us assume there has been a major air crash at Bombay airport, which called upon the resources of all the ambulance services and hospitals in the city. Reading this, you might ask yourself that if an air crash could cause this much emergency aid, what would happen in a major disaster? Just how many emergency cases could be dealt with by hospitals and ambulance services? How many doctors are on duty at night? How much blood do the hospitals normally stock? How quickly could further stocks be obtained from the transfusion service? *Is* there a transfusion service?

Obvious sources for a feature like this would be the head of medical sevices (but bear in mind he may be trying to minimise things), the ambulance service, the fire brigade and the police department. But always try to go outside of official sources to responsible, informed people such as you might find in universities and research institutions.

Some well experienced journalists are able to gather material for a feature, sit down at their typewriter and begin to put it together from their notes. But many more find it is a much better idea to plan their features on paper first.

The intro is conceived in a totally different way from a news story, which is really the essence of the whole story condensed. Just as there are no rules for feature writing, there are certainly none for the way features should start, but clearly you want to grab hold of the readers' interest at once. You will probably spend quite a long time deciding how you are going to start your feature but the rest of the plan will highlight the points you are going to make and probably the order in which you will make them.

News stories end when you have finished stating facts. With features you have much more scope to arrive at a conclusion or, perhaps, summarise the situation and look ahead to the future. Very rarely in a news story will you need to indulge in imagery or, as it is sometimes called in the business, "purple prose". But with features, provided you can handle the palette skilfully enough you can use all the colours of the rainbow.

Here is an excellent example of imagery in the opening of a feature on such a seemingly dry subject as town planning which Ian Moffitt wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The feature was about an area in the city called French's Forest.

He began:

> The Cammeray tribe of aborigines straggled happily through French's Forest before the white man came, carving symbols in the soft flat sandstone. They drew fish and shields; lyre-birds fleeing from the hunters. And they drew the great god Baiamee, their mighty creator and law-giver.
>
> New gods rule the forest now; a new set of symbols applies. The new gods are planners, and their symbols are maps and bulldozers. They are now the law-givers and the hunters.

There is no objection to writing features in the first person but you should have a good reason for studding your piece with "I", as a good writer should be able to impose his personality without this approach.

Look, for example, at this beginning of a feature on New York:

> On any person who desires such queer prizes, New York will bestow the gift of loneliness and the gift of privacy. It is this largess that accounts for the presence within the city's walls of a considerable section of the population; for the residents of Manhattan are to a large extent strangers who have pulled up stakes somewhere and come to town seeking sanctuary or fulfilment or some greater or lesser grail. The capacity to make such dubious gifts is a mysterious quality of New York. It can destroy an individual, or it can fulfil him, depending a good deal on luck. No one should come to New York to live unless he is willing to be lucky.

Nobody should pretend that this sort of writing is easy. No writing is. If it were it would be a very dull way of earning a living.

One good tip which any aspiring feature writer should bear in mind is that whatever he is writing about he should remember that newspaper readers are much more interested in people than they are in things. This means that you should always bear in mind the need to write your features, even if they are features about things, around the people doing the things or affected by the things.

Let us assume that the minister of water has launched a new programme in the rural areas. This is interesting, even important, but hardly the sort of thing to make the pulse of *The Man in the Biscuit Factory* throb any faster as he clocks in at the factory gate with his newspaper under his arm.

How might an imaginative feature writer tackle this on the face of it rather mundane subject? How's this as a first paragraph?

> All her life 72 year old Hannah Kamau has had to walk five miles to the river every morning and five miles home again. In the dry season she has to do this once at sunrise and again at sunset. She started when she was four, when she was living with her parents and looking after the goats. Things did not change for her when she married, nearly 50 years ago. When she was a young woman she could make the return journey, even with two cans of water, in less than two hours. As she got older it took her longer and longer. Sometimes when she was not feeling well she would spend six hours on a round trip.
>
> But from next month she will never have to go to the river again. The government's new water programme for rural areas is bringing a piped supply to her village.

It is not difficult to angle almost any story about an *issue* this way and newspaper readers can identify with the story much better if it is angled round a person.

It is not necessary for something to happen before a feature can be written, like news has to happen before it can be reported. Features have to be thought up.

Profiles of personalities are an obvious source for features but all too often the personalities selected are prominent members of society. Fine, but how about some features on unknown people? What about 700 words on *A Day in the Life of a Road Sweeper*. One of Africa's best women journalists once wrote a first-class feature about lavatory attendants in her city.

Features can often be tied to the news, in the sense that they are exploring either what is going to happen, like a forthcoming budget, or people's reaction to the news when it has happened, such as the budget after it has been announced.

Development is the watchword in every developing country but apart from the often predictable speeches of politicians whose standards and life styles are centred around the city, not very much gets into newspapers that intelligently reflects what is going on in the rural areas.

It is not easy for newspapers to cover the rural areas for hard news but it should be very much easier to give them a fair showing in the feature pages. Any editor who sent out one of his better reporters on, say, a fortnight's tour around the countryside could expect half a dozen good features. He would also be making a real contribution to creating a feeling of togetherness between the city and the country which is often dangerously lacking in many countries. But more than this, he would be serving up to his readers some fresh and worthwhile reading that they might not get anywhere else and which would be infinitely more interesting than the political breast-beating from politicians which newspapers give so much space to.

Picture editing

First principles

Few journalists need to be convinced of the value of a photograph as a means of communication. Only to glance at a picture in a newspaper or magazine, and immediately impressions, often vivid, are received and mentally digested. To achieve the same impact a reporter would probably have to write half a column of colourful prose, and even then it is unlikely the overall result would be as dramatic.

A photograph needs no words – except perhaps for a brief identifying caption. Even an illiterate can "read" something from a picture. Research has shown that most newspaper readers recall more easily the main news picture on a particular day than that day's most widely read news story.

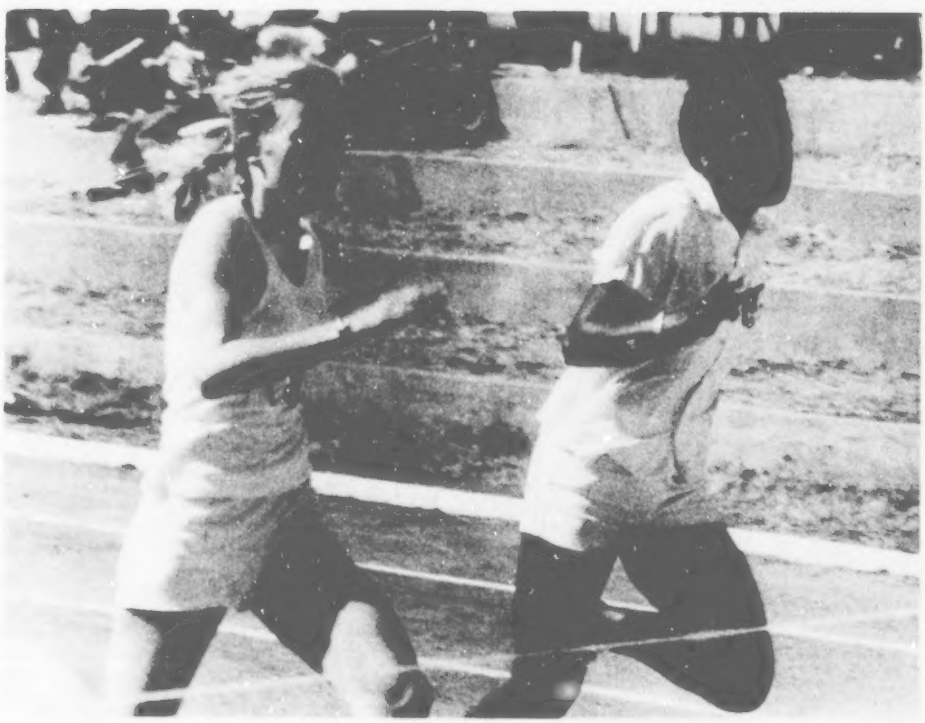
It is not only photographs that have this vital, visual impact. Any illustration – diagram, map, cartoon or line drawing – can be an important communication tool, as well as being useful in injecting sparkle into the otherwise grey tones of a newspaper page.

A newspaper photographer is a journalist in his own right. He must be skilled not only in the handling of a camera; he needs the instinct to be at the right place at the right time – to "get the story" through his camera lens. He may work alone or, more frequently, be accompanying a reporter on an assignment. He will have been briefed at the office beforehand on the type of photograph required. He will know, without being told, that in addition to good pictures he must provide a caption giving details of the subject matter, such as the identity of those in the photograph.

Newspapers which rely heavily on pictures think nothing of a photographer taking up to 100 or more pictures on an important story, although only three or four might eventually be published. But even when covering more humdrum events, the photographer should, where possible, give the editor a selection of pictures.

PICTURES

Left: This picture of President Nyerere of Tanzania in animated conversation bubbles with vitality – the type of "shot" a photographer strives for. Compare it with (below) the static and relatively dull picture of Nyerere, again in the company of Zimbabwe Prime Minister Robert Mugabe.



Another example of a lively picture, where slight blurring caused by slow shutter speed enhances the pace and purpose of the runners.

The two or three prints he submits may all be equally good, but because of the shape of one – it is deep and narrow, perhaps – or because of the direction the subject is facing, one photograph may be more suitable to the editor than another.

In editing photographs, the aim should be to enhance the visual impact. Just as a skilful sub-editor may tighten and brighten a dull piece of writing, so imaginative editing can transform what at first sight was a disappointing print into an arresting picture.

The first task of the picture editor (or whoever is responsible for editing pictures) is to select the photographs to be used and to decide the relative prominence each is to have. They must be judged not only on their technical excellence – bright, sharp, well composed – but also on their editorial value; their newsworthiness and whether they conform to accepted standards of honest reporting and good taste. The editor should recognise the legal implications of publishing a particular photograph; for example, will its appearance in the paper be held to be contempt of court, or will it invite an action for libel.

Having made these decisions, he then proceeds to the editing. The photograph may have to be cropped: cutting out unwanted background, for example, or modifying the proportions of the picture making it, perhaps, narrower than the original photograph. To do this, the unwanted area

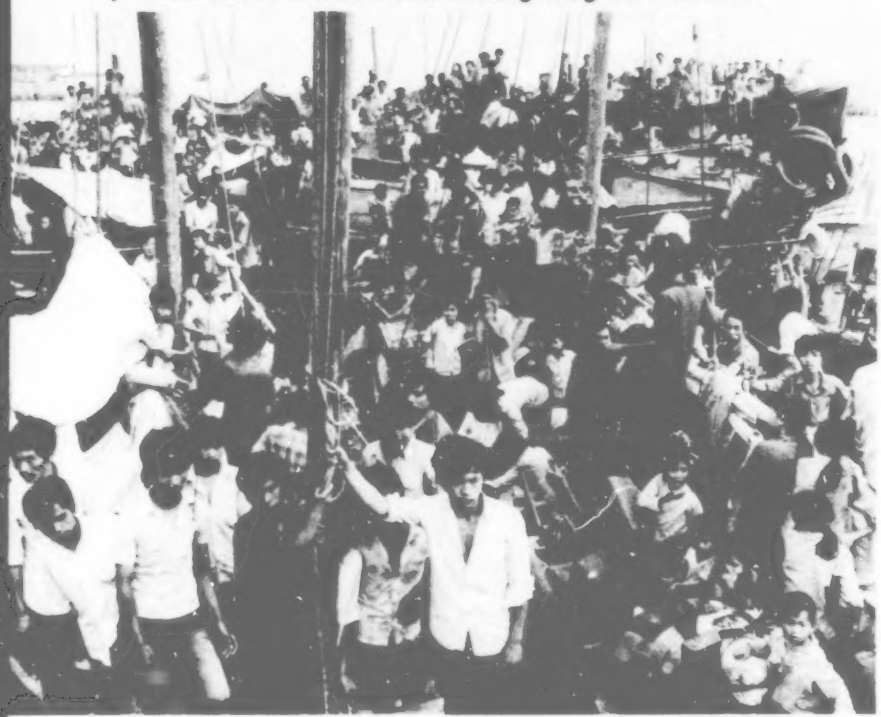
will be marked off on the back of the print. Next, the editor will scale the cropped picture, estimating the area it will occupy on the newspaper page once it has been enlarged or reduced over the required width. Finally, he will edit the caption – this will probably involve rewriting, as few photographers claim to be brilliant caption writers – and compose and edit any headline or other text that has to be run with the picture.

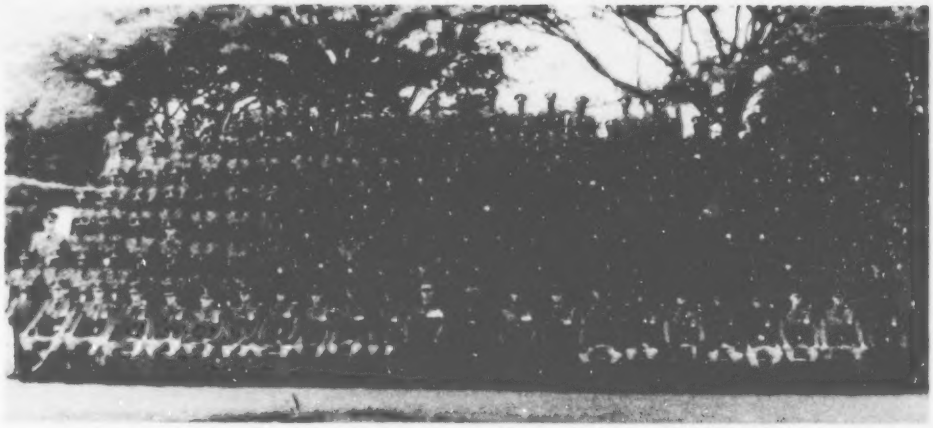
Before considering in detail the methods of cropping and scaling, we must look briefly at the technical aspects of picture reproduction: how the photograph is converted to a printed picture in the page. The methods of newspaper printing are Letterpress and Offset Lithography. Letterpress – the oldest form of printing – is by relief method, using cast metal type or plates on which the image, or print area, is raised above the non-printing area. Ink is applied only to the top surface of the raised areas, and this inked image is then transferred directly to paper.

In Offset Litho the image and non-printing areas are on the same plane, the separation between them on the thin metal plate being maintained chemically. The print image is receptive

The enlargement of the eye of Indira Gandhi shows the dot pattern of a half-tone picture.

Getting in close does not always produce the best results. Faces of the Vietnamese boat refugees are not seen clearly in the top picture, yet it tells more of their arrival in Hong Kong than the other.





Former Zimbabwe Minister Joshua Nkomo posing for a photograph with members of the former colonial Rhodesian police – a wry comment on changing fortunes, but as a newspaper picture its rating must be zero.

to grease (ink) and is water repellent, while the non-printing areas are water receptive and grease repellent. During printing, the ink is kept from the non-printing area by the application of water.

The term Offset – which has become synonymous with Lithography – refers to the inked image being offset first from the metal printing plate to a rubber blanket, and then from blanket to paper. This gives a clear impression on a wide variety of paper textures. The term Web Offset refers to the printing machine being fed by a web, or reel of paper, as opposed to sheet-fed, where the machine prints individual sheets.

One significant effect of Offset Litho is that because of the fine definition it gives on newsprint, pictures much smaller than those usually found in newspapers printed by Letterpress rotary can be used without loss of definition.

In Offset Litho the need for hot metal – the casting of metal type and engraved picture blocks – is eliminated. Type may set by direct-impression or on typewriter composing machines and, once pasted up into a page, it ready for photographic transfer to the printing plate. Pictures can similarly be prepared by making a half-tone negative and bromide, by-passing the need for a half-tone metal engraved block.

What is half-tone? Briefly, it is a method whereby the continuous tones of an ordinary photographic print (tones of varying density which cannot be reproduced by either Letterpress or Offset, as both print only solid in the image areas) are broken up into a regular pattern of dots of varying sizes. Each dot provides a cleary defined print or image area. Sections of the picture where there are small, widely spaced dots appear, by an optical illusion, as a light grey, and areas of large, almost merging dots appear as dark grey or black.

The dots, in Letterpress, are raised, or in relief; in Offset the half-tone negative transfers the dot pattern – each ink receptive and water repellent – to the printing plate.

A picture sequence showing the varying moods of a speaker (right) can be an effective illustration. All the photographs have been closely cropped. Above and below: An even more severe cropping of Joshua Nkomo, and not altogether successful, as his characteristic chubby jowls have been lost. This type of cropping should be used sparingly.

This cut-out retains sections of background, while at the same time eliminating the rather tawdry interior of the hall where a fashion show is in progress. The cut-out also focusses attention on the bewildered gentleman in the ringside seat.

We don't who know is addressing the delegation from Swaziland, but they look rather bored with it all; those at the extreme left and right seem to have fallen asleep. Unless your purpose is to make the reader yawn as well, this picture will not make it into the newspaper.

The fineness of the half-tone screen – indicated by the number of lines or dots to the inch – will be determined by the method of printing and paper texture. Common screen rulings for newspapers by letterpress are 65 to 85, rising to 100 to 133 for offset newspapers. Using too fine a screen will result in the space between dots filling up with ink and poorly printed pictures.

The dots of a half-tone picture are easily discernible on close examination or under magnification.

Cropping

Cropping marks are normally made with pencil on the back of the print, using a light table or holding the print against a window or up to the light so that the image can be seen. Alternatively, pin holes may be made as a guide, or a chinagraph pencil used on the emulsion surface of the photograph, the mark being wiped off after use. Whatever marks are made on the back should be drawn lightly, using a soft pencil, so that they can be easily erased if at any time the picture is to be re-edited.

Cropping lines are drawn with the aid of a ruler, and the sides should form a reasonably upright rectangle. No doubts should arise during production as to where the cropping line lies, and accuracy in drawing will ensure accuracy when scaling by the diagonal line method, which we will discuss later.

A good sports picture, and one not so good. Clear and uncluttered, the picture on the left has plenty of action. Below: There's action here as well, but the players merge confusingly with the backdrop of spectators. And, by the way, where's the ball?

Scaling instructions, that is giving the required width and depth of the picture, usually in centimetres, is sometimes written in pencil on the back of the photograph, together with a word identifying the picture, and the number of the page in which the picture is to appear. Often, however, these are marked separately on an instruction slip when is then attached to the photograph.

Cropping may be considered in two ways. First, there is the cropping done to improve the picture, cutting away unnecessary background or cropping to emphasise some particular aspect of the photograph. Cropping may also be done in order that the picture will fit into certain specific dimension; that is cropping for size.

In the first case there may be no need to crop. Cropping will have occurred already in the darkroom, with the photographer selecting the best area of the negative for his enlargement print.

The editor must study the print carefully before doing any further drastic cropping. He must ask himself why the photographer retained, for example, a large expanse of empty desert. Was it to convey the impression of space, or isolation, or hopelessness? Quick, ill-considered cropping may ruin a picture.

Some photographers regard it almost as an insult if their prints are cropped by the editor, although this shows a lack of understanding of the editor's problems. The latter likes to have some margin for cropping so that, for example, he may cut in at the sides in order that the picture will be 12 cm deep instead of 10 cm when scaled across three columns. Unless he can do so, it may be impossible to attain the desired depth.

In cropping for content or subject matter there are no hard fast rules. Each picture is different; each must be handled in its own special way. All that one can say is that the essential should be dramatised, the inessential discarded.

Generally, one will avoid a square picture; it tends to be static and lifeless. Most photographs suggest either a vertical or horizontal emphasis, and these should be exploited by the editor.

Cropping also has the effect of increasing proportionally the subject area of the photograph, particularly in the portrait, where cutting close to the sides of the face will, over a given measure, greatly increase the features in the resulting picture. The cropping may even cut into the face, lop off the point of a chin or cut across the very top of a head, but this must be done carefully if a distorted effect is not to result.

Newspapers tend to make pictures as large as possible, consistent with the demands for space by other page features. Editorial value will always override technical imperfections. If the photograph is important and dramatic, play it big even though it may be blurred, hazy or out of focus. Strangely, the bigger the picture the less these "faults" seem to matter. They may even add life and atmosphere.

Contrast is the key to page design, and so the big picture may be contrasted with a relatively small picture in the same page. But remember printing quality, and ensure that when deciding the size of a picture an acceptable standard of definition is maintained.

Adding Impact

Pictures never appear in a newspaper in isolation; they are accompanied by text, headlines, borders or rules and, probably, other pictures. The editor is influenced, therefore, by space and design considerations.

Important pictures sometimes arrive late on the editor's table. The page for which they are scheduled may already be complete, with only one space to be filled. Its size and shape will dictate how the photograph has to be cropped.

Squeezing pictures into predetermined areas is not ideal; that is why, in designing a page, pictures should, wherever possible, be placed and edited first, so that they do not run the risk of being ruined by last-minute cropping.

Typographical components such as display type, captions, decorative borders, etc,. must be considered by the editor when cropping. He must think of how the photograph will appear in conjunction with the type. Is the picture, for example, to have its own headline and, if so, how will it be placed? Where is the caption to be placed: at the foot of the picture, at the side, perhaps even above the picture or in a "window" cut into the picture itself? The headline may be partially superimposed on the picture, a "dressing up" device common enough in feature pages. All these considerations will influence the ultimate cropping of the photograph.

A common method of breaking out of the rectangular confines of the picture – something done only rarely and with great care – is to outline, or cut round some part of the picture subject: the top of a head, for example, the side of a face, an arm or the point of a shoe. This technique can add a three-dimensional effect to the picture, giving the impression, say, of a footballer kicking the ball out of the page.

But cut-outs will just as easily emphasise the poor quality of a picture as the good qualities of another. They should be used, therefore, only on flawless pictures, and pictures used in generous dimensions. Cut-outs in small pictures are difficult to do, and visually are a waste of time. To make an effective cut-out, a clearly defined outline is necessary. Don't try to cut feathers, wispy hair or a bushy tree.

The cut-out is not only a method of giving added impact to a picture; it is also a linking device between picture and headline or text. Where type and cut-out appear side by side, the reader will readily connect the two. For a cut-out to be wholly effective, it probably requires a frame. This frame need not be a rule or border. It could be a headline, or even a column of text. Cut-outs that drift off the edge of the page appear weak and uncertain.

The traditional rectangle of a picture can sometimes be changed by cropping the photograph into another geometrical shape: rounding the corners, cutting a circle, for example. Such devices, however, requires close liaison with the process department. Ensure that those responsible are able to produce what you want.

In addition to cropping, there are other ways in which the appearance of the photographic print may be modified before publication as a newspaper picture. Probably the most common, and most acceptable, is for the background of a portrait-type photograph to be painted over by the artist, so that a confusing background appears as a blank wall. There are other devices, such as actually cutting and rearranging sections of the print, or reversing the negative, which are less acceptable. Take for example a photograph of two persons sitting side by side, but so far from each other there is a wide space between them. When scaled, say, across two columns the figures themselves will be small and perhaps unclear on publication. If the editor were to cut round one

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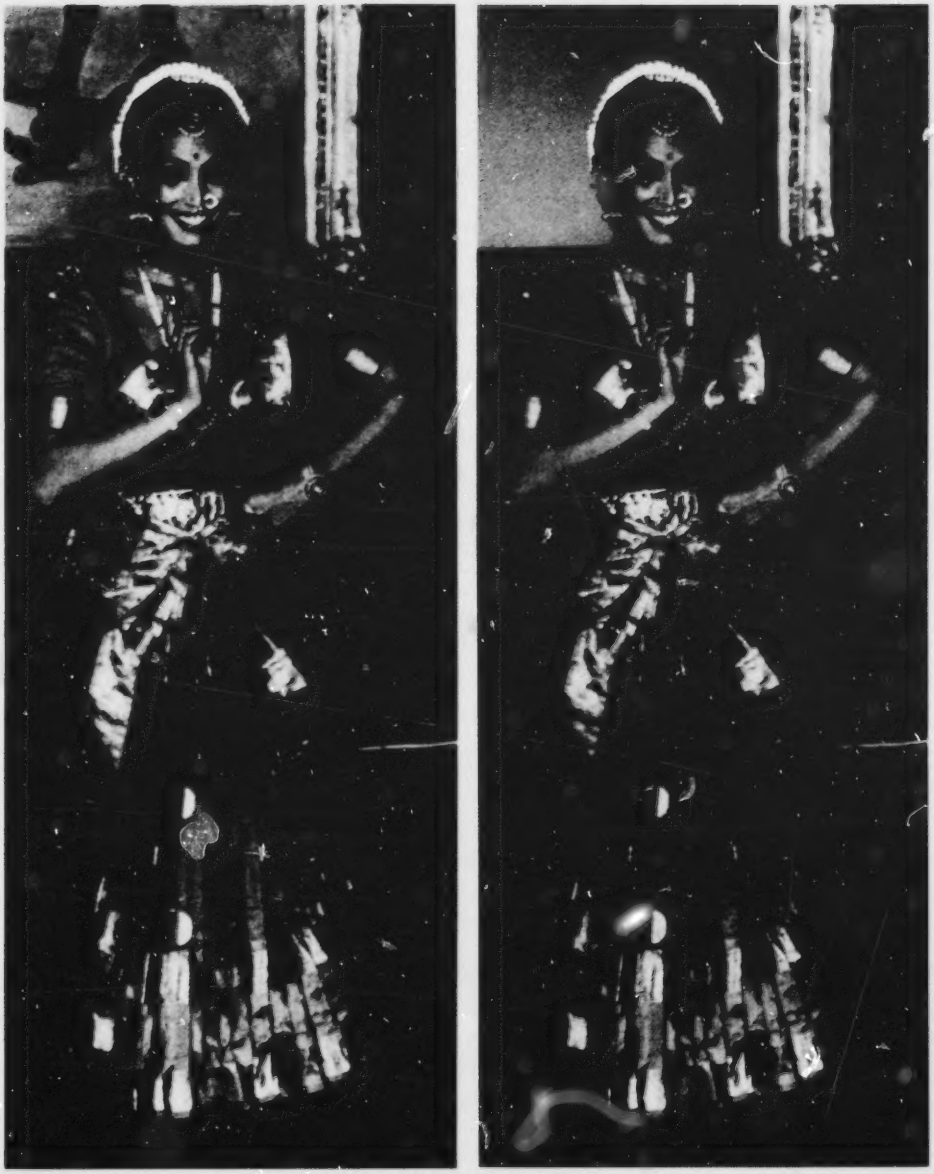


This Indian dancer has all the charm needed to catch your attention but, on the left, your eyes will probably stray to the legs in the background. Those sandalled feet and bare legs are surely familiar. Together with a dhoti, they were the sartorial hallmark of India's sage and saint, Mahatma Gandhi. A pity, perhaps, but on this occasion it might be better to paint them out and leave the pretty dancer to stand on her own feet.

Mr. Mugabe gets a little closer

Space between two figures can cause scaling problems, for it might mean excessive reduction of the photograph – and of the subjects' faces. One solution is to cut round one figure (as has been done here) and re-position it closer to the other. As a result the figures, scaled across the same column width, are appreciably bigger. But consider well before using such devices.

In the top picture close cropping has given maximum focus to the faces in this group. Unfortunately, the atmosphere of a state occasion has been lost. A better cropping is that below, where the picture retains flags, and the background crowds.

figure and move it closer to the other, the amount of reduction in the resulting picture would be much less and the faces would be that much larger. Wonderful, if one can do this without the reader noticing, but then one must ask oneself whether the picture now suggests a degree of intimacy that did not exist before. No editor should tamper with a photograph if, on publication, it departs materially from the truth.

The camera itself, of course, can appear to lie: an accidental grouping may show a man with three legs or a giraffe with two heads. The high-powered telephoto lens brings objects at varying distances from the camera not only much closer but also much closer to each other. The apparent bunching of track athletes or of racing cars coming round a bend are common examples of this. On the other hand, the wide-angle lens or, to go to the extreme, the fish-eye lens will produce an image that no human eye perceives. These camera deceptions are accepted by everyone, and even welcomed in that an arresting quality may be given to a picture that is not found in the ordinary, straight-forward photograph.

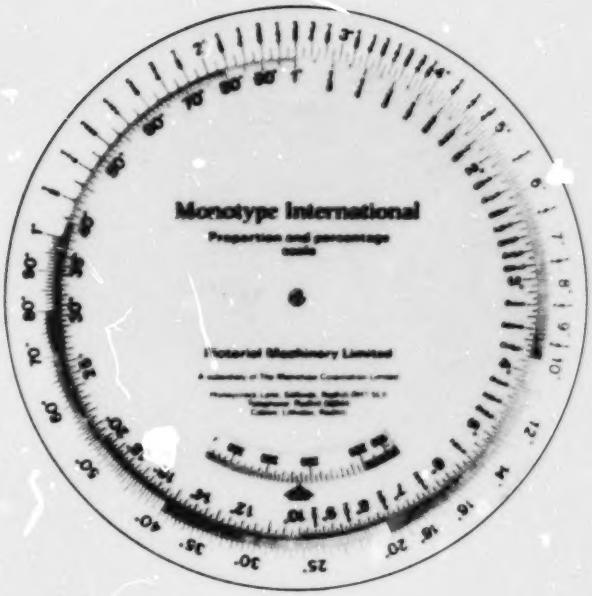
Accidental tricks of the camera can cause not only laughs, but also libel suits. The picture that suggests wrongly that a woman is pregnant or that a man is striking someone when in fact he was

A basic cropping rule: If you want to increase picture depth over a given width, crop in closer at the sides of the photograph. Here an additional 2.5 cm has been achieved by this means.

only waving his arms could have unfortunate legal repercussions. While damages might not lie against a newspaper for publishing such a photograph – much would depend on the caption – if it could be shown that the original photograph had been materially altered in the editing process, the editor could be in trouble.

The picture editor should no more tamper with the truth than should the reporter.

SCALING



A proportion and percentage scale. By aligning the width of the photograph and the required width of the picture on the inner and outer scales, the depth of the new dimension can be read off. The window in the inner disc shows the percentage reduction or enlargement. Below: The diagonal line method of scaling. The picture, a 5 cm square, would occupy the larger area if its width was increased to 10 cm.

This is how the picture on the opposite page will look if scaled across 10 cm.

Scaling

After a photograph has been cropped, the editor scales it to the required size; that is, he decides how wide he wants the picture, and estimates its corresponding depth. The first measurement is usually expressed in columns, the width of a column varying, of course, from one publication to the next. Newspaper columns go from about eight picas to 14 picas (one pica or em being approximately equivalent to one-sixth of an inch).

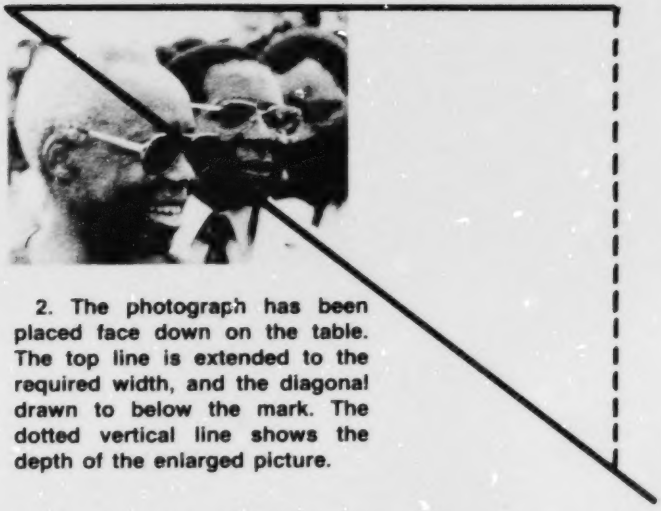
It sometimes happens that a photograph can be conveniently cropped to the exact size required, both width and depth. Usually, however, there will be some reduction or enlargement, and the editor must then calculate the depth in relation to the required width and instruct the process department accordingly.

Depth expressed in inches (or, more commonly, centimetres), is determined (1) by the cropping lines and (2) by the number of columns across which the picture is to be scaled. If it is found that the picture will be, say, 12 cm deep, this can be varied only by modifying the cropping lines or changing the width.

Although the general sequence of picture editing is to crop first and scale afterwards, the editor, after tentatively cropping for content, will be prepared to modify this in order that the

THE BIGGER PICTURE

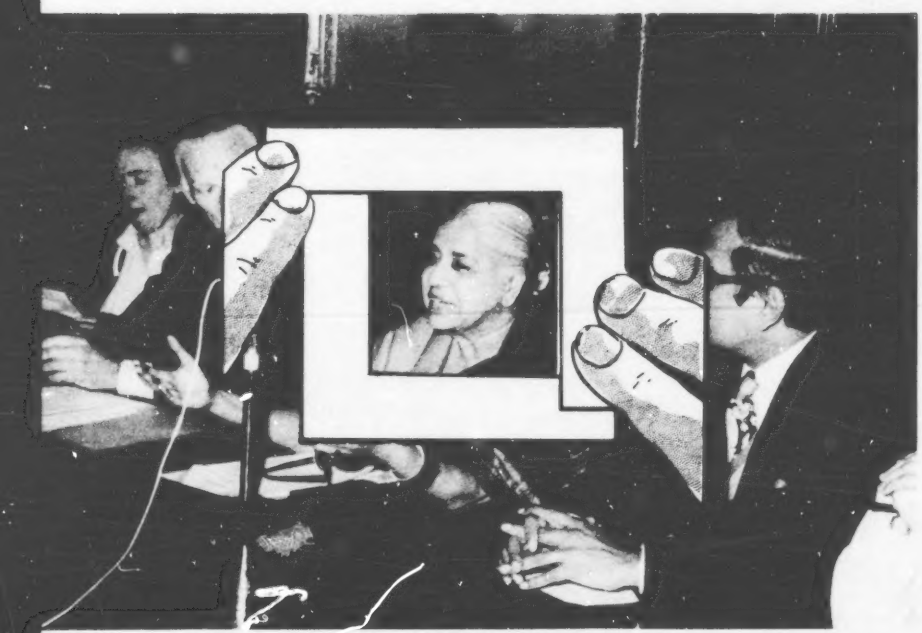
1. When enlarging by the diagonal line method, the diagonal may extend beyond the area of the photograph. The photograph here is 5 cm by 3.7 cm; it has to be enlarged to across 9 cm.



2. The photograph has been placed face down on the table. The top line is extended to the required width, and the diagonal drawn to below the mark. The dotted vertical line shows the depth of the enlarged picture.

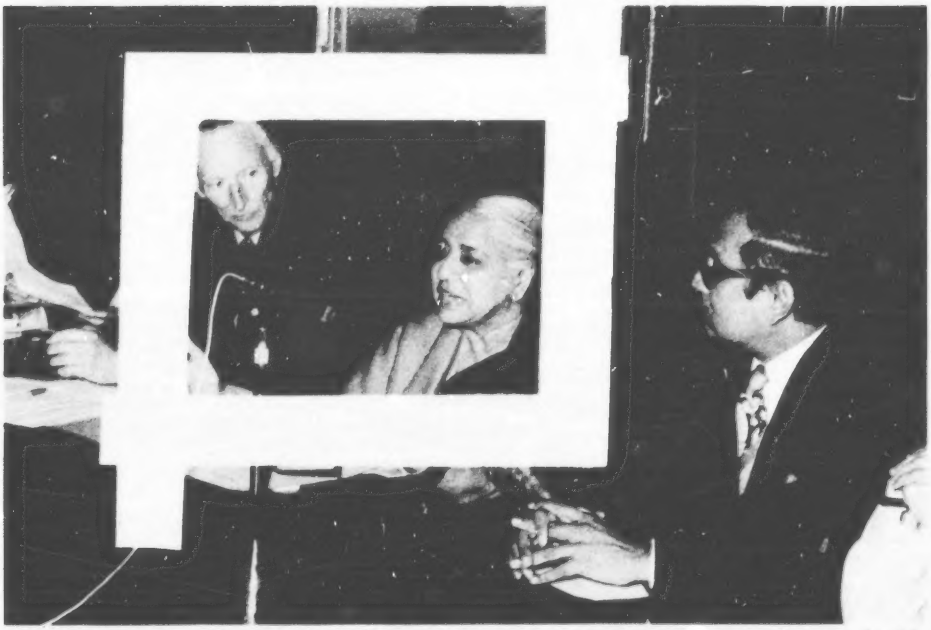
3. The finished picture 9 cm by 6.8 cm deep.

Above: The original shot, rather static and dead. Below: the 'L' shaped pieces are pushed together and find a good single column shot.



An 'L' of a way to crop!

An easy – and very effective – method of cropping is to use two home-made L shaped pieces of card-board (about six inches by six inches is a good size) and then use them to find the best frame for your finished picture.



Another framing, this time including another person and probably making a double column picture.

And if you want to get the other man in, then this framing will give him to you.

picture fits the available space. It is usually a combined operation, with the hard realities of the page plan impingeing on the aesthetic options offered by the photograph.

Scaling of photographs is done with the aid of a printer's proportion scale or, if that is not available, by using the less precise diagonal line method. The introduction of high-speed, in some cases computerised, process cameras has meant that a percentage as well as a proportion scale is an essential piece of equipment for the picture editor.

The scale consists of an inner disc on which the figure, in inches or centimetres, relating to the width of the photograph is aligned with the figure on the outer disc which represents the new dimension: the width of the required two-column or three-column picture. Once the scale has been set, the depth of the picture can be readily ascertained on the outer disc by reference to the depth of the original photograph on the inner disc. At the same time, a window in the centre of the scale will indicate the percentage reduction or enlargement that is involved, this forming a necessary part of the editor's scaling instructions.

Picture widths are ususally expressed in centimetres. For a publication using a 12pica or 12em columns, with one pica break between columns, the picture widths would be: single column, 5 cm; double column, 10.5 cm; three column, 16.2 cm; four column, 21.6 cm, and so on. The progressive increase in the widths is accounted for by the inclusion of the column breaks: one in a double column picture, two in three columns, three in four columns.

The proportion scale allows the editor to know not only dimensions the photograph will have when reduced or enlarged across a specific column width, but also the dimensions of any area of the photograph. He can therefore easily calculate area size for type insets, "windows", and other kinds of cut-out.

If a proportion scale is not available, then the editor will have to resort to the less accurate diagonal line method. This will give, readily enough, the depth of the picture and can also be used for calculating the dimensions of any part of the photograph, but it is of little use where percentage reduction or enlargement has to be determined.

The principle of the diagonal line method is straightforward. Imagine a square, with sides of 10 cm. Draw a diagonal line from the top left corner to bottom right. Take a point halfway along the top of the square, that is 5 cm, and from there draw a vertical line down to the point where it cuts the diagonal. Then complete the bottom line, so that another rectangle is formed within the original square. That rectangle will be found also to be a square, each side being 5 cm.

Translated into picture scaling terms, the first square represents the original photograph, the smaller square the picture, reduced in size, as it will appear in the newspaper. We also know, because of the simplicity of this particular model, that there has been a 50 per cent size reduction. In practice, the picture is unlikely to be a square, but the principle is always the same.

To repeat the sequence of scale: 1) measure off from the topleft corner of the photograph the required width; 2) draw the diagonal, or the section of the diagonal that lies immediately below the required width mark; 3) holding the ruler parallel to the picture vertical, mark where the ruler cuts the diagonal, this measurement giving the depth of the scaled picture.

Scaling instructions would then normally be written on the back of the photograph, with the width expressed in columns (always written first) and then the depth in centimetres (2 col x 8 cm). If the picture width is a bastard measure (lying between columns) the width would be expressed also in centimetres (14 cm x 15 cm). Here, again, note that the width measurement is given first.

Stepping out of the page

Cutting round a foot and an arm can give a three-dimensional effect; the subject appears to walk out of the picture. When scaling, it is important to allow for the projections of arm and foot.

The same scaling procedure is followed where the required picture is an enlargement instead of a reduction of the original photograph. The only difference is that the required width will lie beyond the right-hand corner of the cropped photograph, and the diagonal line will thus have to be extended beyond the bottom right corner. Despite this, the relevant measuring marks will usually be within the area of the photographic print, although in the case of a substantial enlargement, the marks may lie outside the photograph. Easier working can then be achieved by covering the desk with a plain sheet of newsprint. The extension of the top line of the cropped photograph can be extended on to the paper, and the required width marked off. Likewise, the diagonal can be extended beyond the bottom corner of the photograph to the paper, to bring it under the width mark. The depth measurement can be read off in the usual way.

A difficulty here is to ensure that the photograph is not accidentally moved between marking off the required width and drawing the diagonal. Practice makes perfect, but at the beginning it may be advisable to fix the photograph on the paper with tape.

So far, we have assumed that in scaling the photograph there has been no restriction on what the picture depth might be. The photograph will have been cropped solely for content, the dimensions of the picture as scaled established, and then drawn on to the lay-out sheet or "dummy". Often, however, the editor may be restricted as to the depth of the picture. There may, for example, be only space for a 20 cm deep picture. It follows, therefore, that the photogaph must be cropped within that measure; if the first scaling shows that the picture will in fact be 22 cm deep, then cropping adjustments must be made. There is one basic rule to remember, a rule to which we have already alluded: the narrower a cropped photograph is, the greater will be its depth when scaled over a given width.

On the following page is a complete cut-out of the figure in the picture on the left. Note the frame that has been drawn behind the figure to occupy what would otherwise be excessive white space. In making such cut-outs, do not forget areas such as those beneath the arms. These should be shaded on the back of the photograph to draw the attention of the picture engraver.

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Cut-out complications

Although the rectangle is the usual shape for the newspaper picture, the editor may at times cut steps or windows into the picture to insert type, or he may cut round certain features of a photograph, a head, for example, or a foot, or the front wheel of a car, in order to give a three-dimensional effect or to link the picture with a headline or other typographical material in a page. In doing so he must be abel to estimate what the dimensions of these particular areas of the photograph will be.

As has been said already, a proportion scale will readily provide the answer. The same answer can also be arrived at by using the diagonal line method or by a simple ratio calculation.

Let us consider, first, the cutting of a simple step in the top left corner of a picture, in order that the headline of an accompanying story may run into the picture. If the step is of single column width – as is often the case – or is a multiple or fraction of a column, then the step is, for most practical purposes, a simple fraction of the total width of the picture.

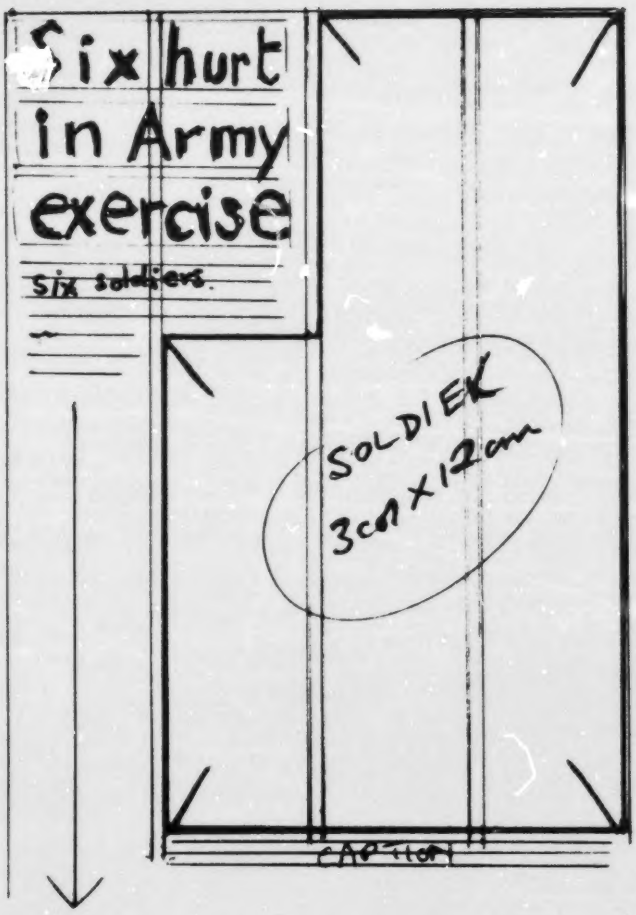
For example, a single-column step cut into a three-dimensional picture will be approximately one-third of the width of the picture. If one-third of the width of the original photograph is measured off, it will correspond to the width of a single-column step when the photograph is reduced or enlarged, as the case may be, to across three columns. (Because of the space between columns, one-third of the original photograph will in fact be proportionally more than the width of a single-column step on a three-column picture, but for practical purposes this difference can be ignored by picture editor).

Thus, if the width of the photograph is 21 cm, to be scaled to a three-column picture, and the editor wants to cut a single-column step in the left corner, he will first of all measure along the top of the photograph one-third of 21 cm, that is 7 cm, and drawn from there a short vertical line. This line marks the width of the step on the photograph. As for the depth of the actual step, this will have been determined by the size of the type to be inserted. Let us say that the editor requires a step 2 cm deep. He would therefore next measure along the top of the picture the width of a single column (which in the case of a picture reduction would be less than one-third the width of the original photograph) and measure down from that point the required 2 cm. Completing the reverse scaling, he would then draw a diagonal from the corner of the photograph, through the 2 cm mark, to the point where it cuts the vertical line, marking off one-third of the photograph width. By drawing in the bottom line to complete the small rectangle, he will have established the area on the photograph that will have to be cut give a single column step 2 cm wide.

Sometimes, instead of a step cut at the corner of a picture, the editor may make a three-sided excision at the side, to insert type. If the width of this can be exprssed in columns or a fraction of a column the same method can be used as that described above, the only additional problem that of determining how far down on the completed picture the cut-out will lie once its position has been decided on the original photograph.

This information is likely to be necessary for calculating the number of lines of type that has to be set across a certain measure in the accompanying text.

The answer may be obtained by simple ratio. First, list three measurements that are known: 1) distance from top of photograph to top of cut-out as drawn in; 2) depth of original photograph; 3) depth of the completed picture. Then let x by the distance from the top of the picture to the top of the copleted cut-out.

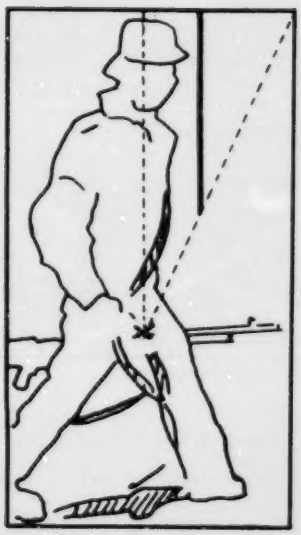


CUTTING INTO PICTURES

The picture on the right has to be scaled across three columns, as represented on the lay-out above. In addition, a single-column step is to be cut for accompanying type. The problem is to draw on the back of the photograph an area which, when the photograph has been enlarged, will be of the required dimensions.

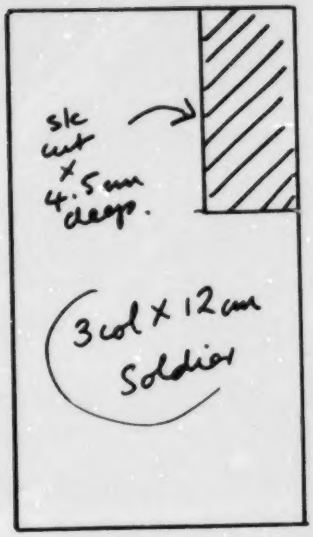
1. Mark off on the back of the photograph one-third of the width, and draw a small vertical line. As the step is on the left of the photograph, the marking on the back will be at the right-hand side.

2. Mark off the width of a single-column cut-out, and from that point measure down the required depth of the cut-out.



3. Draw a diagonal from the right-hand corner to the point that has been measured off on the dotted line. This line will cut the small vertical line.

4. Complete the cut-out by drawing in the bottom line from the diagonal to the edge of the photograph and shade the area to be cut out.



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Left: The back of the photograph with the instructions for cut-out and scaling. Below: the finished product.

Six hurt in Army exercise

Six soldiers were injured – one of them seriously – during joint air and ground exercises in the Ndaka area of Mumengani district yesterday.

A military spokesman said one of the soldiers, a sergeant in the 1st Battalion Paratroop Regiment, was accidentally shot in the leg during a mock attack using live ammunition.

He was taken to the military hospital at Iringa, where he underwent an operation for the removal of a bullet.

The other five soldiers were slightly injured when their truck crashed and overturned during the night. They were all able to resume duty after treatment at a first-aid post.

The exercise, code-named Operation Gauntlet, began yesterday and is due to continue until Saturday. Two infantry regiments, two companies of Paratroopers and a squadron of fighter-bombers are taking part.

AIR SUPPORT

The officer in charge of the exercise, Major-General Chopa Imefumpika, said its purpose was to exercise troops in anti-insurgent tactics, using close air support.

Commenting on the six casualties that had occurred so far, Major-General Imefumpika said accidents in an exercise of this nature were almost inevitable. Every precaution was taken, however, to minimize casualties.

He recalled that in a similar exercise last year one soldier was accidentally killed when he strayed into a minefield.

Though there is a suspicion here that the groups have been specially posed, this picture of war casualties in a Punjab hospital clearly portrays the bustle of a busy ward.

Setting these out, we have:

Distance to cut-out on picture		Depth of picture
x	:	18
Distance to cut-out on photograph		Depth of photograph
24 cm	:	30 cm

Cross-multiply 18 by 24 = 432, divide by 30, which gives value of x as 14.4. So the distance to the cut-out from the top of the picture in the page will be 14.4 cm.

If the width of a step or cut-out cannot be expressed easily as a fraction of the width of the picture, a similar calculation to that above can be used. The editor will know the width of the photograph (he measures this off with a ruler) and the width of the proposed reduction or enlargement (three-column picture, say, or 16.2 cm). He will also know the width of the cut-out as drawn on the back of the photograph and require to know how wide this will be on the reproduction, or he will know how wide he wishes that cut-out on reproduction to be and want to know how wide this must be on the back of the photograph.

An equation can then be set out:

Width of photograph	:	Width of cut-out on photograph
Width of picture	:	Width of cut-out on picture

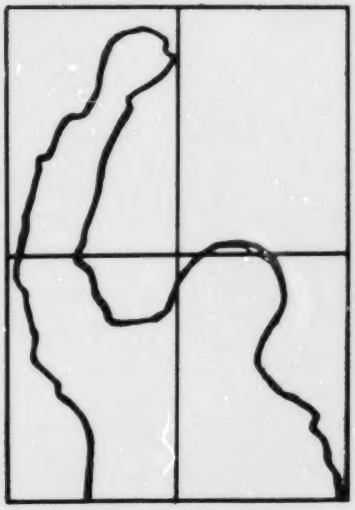
Whatever the circumstances of the editing problem, three out of four measurements will be known; the fourth, the unknown, can be found by simple ratio.

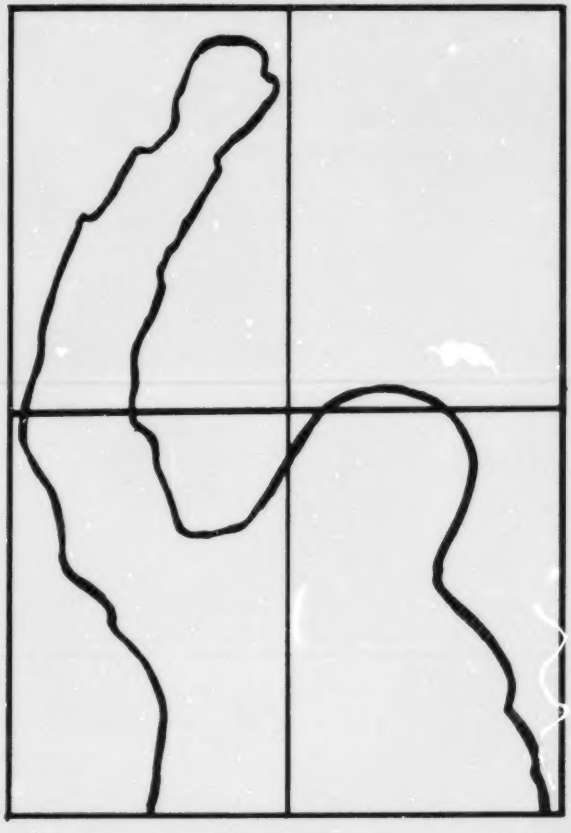
The most complicated cut-out is where the whole of the subject, or a large part of it, is outlined. In such a case it is likely that the headline and text type is closely linked with the picture, and this will necessitate calculation on such questions as type measurements. Once the desired outline has been drawn on the back of the photograph, the particular areas where the type is to be inserted will be marked off. These will be small rectangles and it will not be difficult, using a combination of ratio and diagonal line method, to determine the dimensions of these particular areas once the photograph has been reduced or enlarged for reproduction.

If one has a good eye and a flair for drawing, it is possible to do a free-hand drawing of the shape of the outlined subject matter in the size for reproduction by dividing the subject into four or more equal parts, reproducing these areas in the desired size, and copying roughly the pattern as it appears in each area. By this means an adequate representation of the completed picture is at hand, and the setting measurements for accompanying text and headlines can be confidently determined.

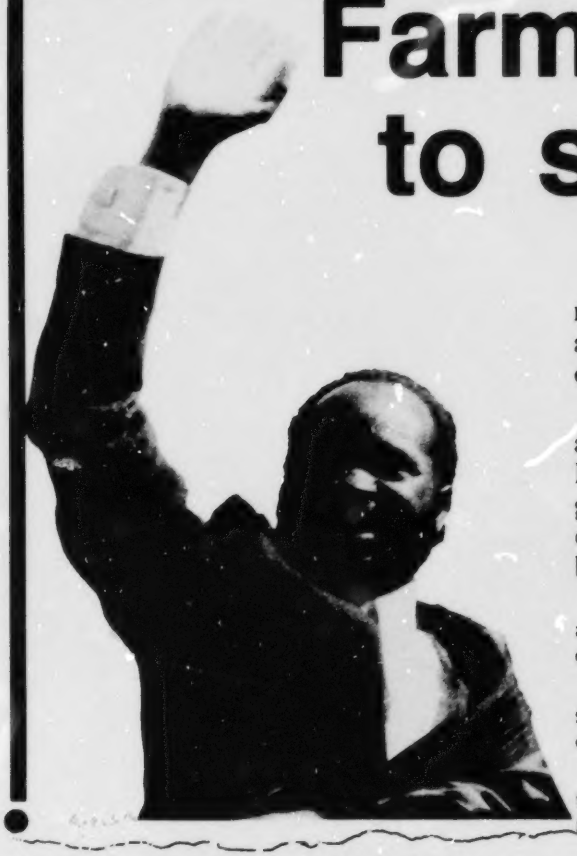
Care in the selection, cropping and scaling of pictures is even more important where a number of pictures are being placed on the same page. Ideally, pictures should have accompanying stories or, where used in a "picture page" accompanied by captions, they should be related to each other. A page of unrelated pictures should be avoided, as they lose their individual impact, one being in competition with another.

In contrast to the picture on the opposite page, this line-up of certificate winners is too formal and static to merit much attention from the reader. The photographer might have done better if he had bunched three or four students together, showing them shaking hands and congratulating each other on their success.





The editor has decided to make a cut-out of President Samora Machel of Mozambique. He wants to know roughly the area the cut-out will occupy when enlarged to a specific width. First he traces the figure into a frame of four equal sections (top right). He then draws a similar frame, equivalent to the size of the enlargement. Working section by section, using the frame as a quide, it is not difficult to draw in the outline of a larger figure. The result is seen on the following page.



Farmers ur to step up

A call for greater efforts b made by Presiden Samora M a tour of agricultural projec of the country.

In an address to staff and an agricultural training cent Machel said that despite a gultural machinery, and se earlier in the year, the cro been maintained at reasonab

He attacked those who refuse advice of the agricultural officers o of rice and care of coffee bushes.

However, if the country was to m set by the five-year development efforts by farmers would have to be

President Mach received an enthu from thousands of schoolchildren who mile route from the airstrip to the agri

Where pictures, on the same theme, are used together, there should be a contrast in their treatment. One should be the dominating picture, and the action in this picture should lead the viewer's eye into the other picture on the page. If similar related pictures are to be placed side by side, for example a row of head-and-shoulder pictures, it is important not only to ensure that they have been scaled so that the various faces are approximately of the same size, but that the pictures are of equal depth, so that there is a pleasing regularity and neatness.

It is important not to confuse the variety and contrast that one should find in a page of pictures with untidiness and bitty appearance.